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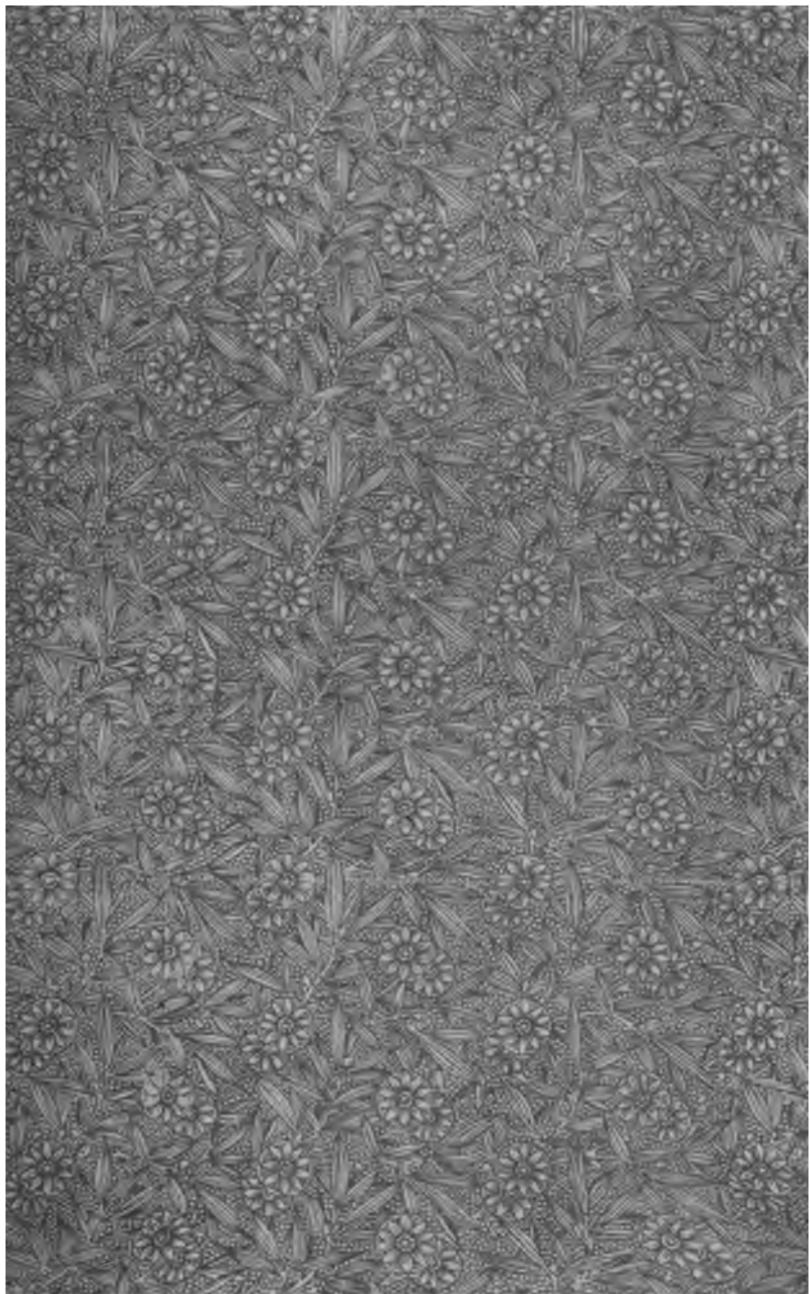
HIS DEAREST WISH

THE
LADY

By HUBERT WADE









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HIS DEAREST WISH.

A Novel.

BY

MRS. HIBBERT WARE,

AUTHOR OF

'THE KING OF BATH,' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON :

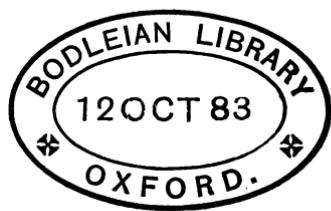
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HIS DEAREST WISH.



CHAPTER I.

CONSOLATION.

IN the widow Gillespie's dining-parlour sat Charlie Macdonald and Tony Witham, the guidwife herself being absent, intent on hospitable preparations for the noontide meal, at which Tony was to be a guest.

'Ah, Tony,' said young Macdonald, with a deep sigh, 'I wish I could see the matter in as hopeful a light as you do; but I cannot. I am tormented by doubts and fears of every kind. Your sister Winnie is so beautiful, so charming a young lady,

so sweet a creature, that she must win hearts wherever she goes ; and,' he added with a touch of bitterness in his tone, ' the hearts of admirers who have rank and wealth to lay at her feet—not of men like me, poor and nameless.'

' You, a Macdonald, and call yourself nameless ! ' said Tony. ' Oons, Charlie, what maggot has hit your crown ? And as for wealth, zounds, man, Winnie cares not a fig for riches ! Besides, you are not poor—your friends at Inverness are well off ; and I can assure you that my sister hath a greater liking for you than for any of the fops and pretty fellows in London who dance attendance upon her.'

' From so many rivals,' exclaimed Charlie, with a gesture of despair, ' it is impossible but that, sooner or later, she will meet with one whose image will speedily efface mine from her heart.'

' Ads my life, Winnie is made of other stuff than I take her to be,' said Tony, with a hearty laugh, ' an she suffers the image of one of the bepowdered and be-

scented popinjays I have seen to blot out that of Charlie Macdonald !'

'If I only knew what her feelings were ! but she has never so much as given me a single word of encouragement, nay, not even a look,' said Charlie. 'I tell you what, Tony,' he added, looking very woe-begone, 'I think that your great friendship for me blinds you ; you fancy that your sister must needs love me because you do. Truly she does love me, charming young creature ! but only as a friend, a brother, I might say, or she would have said something to you had it been otherwise.'

'Hang it, Charlie,' exclaimed Tony, very emphatically, 'she is much too shy and maidenly to discuss such a subject with a brother ! an I had been a sister, 'twould be different. What the plague would you have ? Would you have her own her love for a man who hath never yet spoke a word of love to her ? Why could you not have told her you loved her ?'

‘Tony,’ replied Charlie reproachfully, ‘that sounds almost like a taunt. You know what an effort it hath cost me to keep my affection for your sister a secret. I should be immeasurably base in my own eyes if I had attempted to steal my way into her fresh young heart whilst I am yet poor and unknown. Until I have won my way to fame and substantial honour, I must suffer all the pangs of jealous doubt and fear, and the constant dread of hearing that a more fortunate rival has asked and won the hand of the charming young creature I have loved from my very childhood.’

‘Charlie, how often am I to tell you,’ exclaimed Tony in a voice almost of irritation, ‘that Winnie cares nothing for any of her admirers? You torture yourself needlessly. I’ faith, you are like all lovers! Ad rabbit it, as soon as ever they fall in love, straightway they take leave of their senses; and if they were never such wise men before, they become daft where a mistress is concerned.’

‘ You talk very sagely now, Tony ; but wait till you fall in love yourself.’

‘ That I never shall do,’ replied Tony, a grave expression resting for a moment on his gay, mirthful face, like a cloud flitting across a summer sky. ‘ Besides, look at me, Charlie,’ he added in a bantering tone: ‘ have I the air of what the ladies call a pretty fellow, or a dear creature ? Do you think I should suit the elegant fine ladies and young belles of the present day ? Why, man, I can’t comb a lap-dog, or present my snuff-box gallantly to a lady. I can’t recommend the best scented hair-powder. I have no knowledge of the art of talking nonsense in an accomplished way, or of knotting and fringing ; and I could not pretend to offer advice as to the cut of a cap, or the assortment of colours ; so, my dear Charlie, I must just remain as I am, neither loving nor loved. But now, Charlie, to return to your affair, why will you persist in tormenting yourself by thinking that Winnie cares nothing for you ? I assure you that though she

keeps her thoughts secret, I have penetration enough to see that her affection for you is as great as yours for her. Was I not right about Jimmy Hog? His love, which was at fever-heat, has quite cooled down; and the charming condescension of his new flame, Miss Flora Stewart, makes up for the cold indifference of Miss Winnie Witham.'

'Is it really true, then,' asked Charlie, with a look of relief, 'that he has ceased to be one of your sister's admirers?'

'True enough; and I can tell you what, Miss Stewart is like to be the permanent goddess of his adoration. Oons, an they make a match, they will be well paired. You know what a beau he always was; but since he left the army he has quite succeeded in making himself what is called a very pretty young fellow about town. Egad, there was quite a rivalry amongst ladies of fashion who should first engage him to their routs and drums. Nobody could come into a side-box at the theatre with so graceful a negligence as Jimmy

Hog ! Who but Jimmy for all toilettes and morning-parties ? Who had the most accomplished way of talking stuff but Jimmy ? And as for Miss Flora Stewart, zounds, she is a lady of the first fashion ! The ball, the opera, and the play, with giving and receiving visits, engross all the time that can be spared from the toilette. She vows that she doats on Garrick, but she likes Barry vastly, and that Lowe is a sweet singer ; that Vauxhall, Ranelagh, and Goodman's Gardens are perfect heavens, though, in her opinion, Ranelagh is the genteest, especially for breakfasts. Her head-dress, or pompon, as it is called, is a miracle of art and skill, its component parts being a regular confusion of hair and wool, of powder, pins, pomatum, and perfume—so much for her head-dress ; and now for her tail-dress. She is furbelowed from top to bottom ; and, as every woman of fashion now strives to have the most expansive dress, she supplies herself with a cork round-about, which she conceals under the folds of her gown, to which she tacks a

long tail behind to sweep up all the dirt in the Park or on the Mall ; but she is coming here soon to stay with some old friends, and you will see her. She was to have visited my mother, you know, last autumn ; but that unexpected marriage in our family stopped the visit.'

Charlie, notwithstanding his melancholy mood, could not restrain a laugh at this account of Lieutenant Hog and his mistress ; and then he asked rather abruptly :

' How do you like Captain Edmondston ? Don't think that I am indifferent to your happiness, Tony, though my talk has been all of self.'

' I tell you what, Charlie, I don't much like the outlook of affairs,' replied the young squire. ' The Captain is a mighty good-natured fellow, and my sisters are vastly fond of him, and I like him—i' faith, I can't help liking him, though, at the same time, I think 'twill prove an ill chance that brought him and my mother together. He is a desperate gambler, Charlie. Not long after their marriage my mother had to

pay away almost all her savings for a heavy bet he had made at a race last year, and for which he had given his note. But I could not help being sorry for him, for it was a provoking loss. You see, the Duke of Hamilton and Earl March had made a match at Newmarket, and each of them rode his own horse over the Beacon Course. Captain Edmondston had backed Lord March's horse in a heavy sum, and my lord came in first; but you can imagine the Captain's chagrin when my lord was weighed and found to be wanting half a pound in weight, and the match was adjudged to the duke.'

'A very provoking affair, certainly,' observed Charlie.

'But the Captain's gambling is not confined to the racecourse,' continued Tony, very gravely; 'he spends a deal of time at the coffee-houses, either at Button's, Tom's, or Will's in Russell Street, and White's Chocolate House in St. James's, where you may see any number of blue and green ribbons and stars chatting and playing

piquet till midnight. Mr. Hog knows something of his propensity ; and that may be the reason why, since my mother's marriage, he cares no longer to see his son wed our Winnie.'

Here Tony paused, and gazed thoughtfully through the casement, as though he were watching the sunlit waters of the Frith of Forth ; and while he muses, and Charlie ponders over his last remarks with an uneasy feeling, let us say a few words about young James Hog before we meet with him again in our next chapter.

Fop though he was, he was a brave man, and had entered the army quite as much from love of the service as from love of a scarlet coat—which last somewhat ignoble affection his father, in vexation of spirit at his foppishness and extravagance, had imputed to him. Thus it was that, disappointed in his military aspiration, the young officer chafed much at the inactivity which the capitulation at Fort William Henry had enforced upon him, especially when he heard that scenes of great im-

portance were being enacted in North America.

The Ministry having determined to make vigorous efforts against the French in that country, Admiral Boscawen was appointed to the command of the fleet destined for that service ; while the chief command of the army, which amounted to about 50,000 men, devolved upon Major-General Abercrombie, the Earl of Loudon, a dilatory and incompetent general, having returned to England. Nor was America the only theatre on which British energy and activity were displayed. Several petty descents were made upon the coasts of France, and inglorious though these attacks generally were, yet Lieutenant Hog's feelings were so hurt by his enforced inactivity, that with the counsel, or perhaps at the instigation, of his father, he resigned his commission.

Captain Edmondston had also quitted the army ; but the new state of life into which he had entered had as much to do with the step he had taken, as chagrin at

not being engaged in active service, at a time when the country was preparing for a new war on the continent of Europe, which was anticipated, as well by the King's speech from the throne, at the close of the preceding year, as by the implied confidence placed in him by a House of Commons whose compliance knew no bounds in granting him most liberal supplies, the greater part of which were bestowed on his German allies, whom the British nation thus lavishly paid to fight battles which did not concern England.

‘Mrs. Witham still favours Jimmy Hog’s suit, does she not?’ asked Charlie, after he and his friend had sat silent for some few minutes.

‘My dear fellow, there is now no suit at all,’ replied Tony, laughing. ‘But egad, I believe that my sister and he are better friends than ever they were wont to be, since Winnie now knows she will be no longer compelled to receive attentions that are unwelcome to her. My mother, I must own, has not yet abandoned all hope. Poor

'mother!' he added, with a sigh; 'she puts too great a value on wealth, and seems more eager than ever, lately, that Winnie should make a grand match.'

'Ah, Tony, there is no chance for me,' said Macdonald sorrowfully; 'for if I am ever so fortunate, it will be years before I shall be a rich man, and, in the meantime, Madam Witham will marry your sister to some wealthy suitor.'

'Zounds! Charlie, how often must I tell you no?' replied Tony, very emphatically. 'Winnie is a good, sensible girl, and will not pain or distress my mother an she can help it; but she is a determined little wench too, and hath a spirit of her own, and not even to please my mother would she give her hand where she could not give her heart. And egad, in such disobedience, if disobedience it were, I would support her; but affairs would never come to that pass, for my dear mother would yield before very long, I am sure. As to James Hog, we must hope for a speedy and favourable issue to his new love-suit, and that he may

wed Miss Flora Stewart without loss of time ; and for all that he has been your rival, Charlie, we'll wish him better luck than Dr. Glen has had with his young bride, for I heard this morning that there was a separation by mutual consent. The doctor is, I suppose, rejoicing in his freedom again, after three weeks' thrall.'

' Yes ; but there is one drawback to the good doctor's enjoyment,' said Charlie, laughing, ' in the hard fact that he has had to settle a sufficient aliment on his affectionate spouse.'



CHAPTER II.

A BEAU TRAP.

MR. JAMES Hog, late a lieutenant in Colonel Monro's regiment, preferring the life and gaiety of a city to the more tranquil enjoyments of his country house at Newliston, had engaged, after enduring a little paternal grumbling from his sire, so lavish in the allowance made to his son and heir, though so penurious in all other matters, a portion of a flat in a land in the Nether Bow; and here we shall find him on the sunny June morning on which this chapter opens, occupied in the, to him, always pleasant task of adorning his person —a task which he was bent on performing to the best of his ability on this occasion,

because he was going to ride with the fair enslaver of his heart, that charming and surprising creature, as he styled her, Miss Flora Stewart.

The appearance of Mr. James Hog's apartment furnished some clue to his tastes. The room was plentifully scattered with clothes, and with all sorts of frippery from Paris. Fashionable velvet coats and embroidered waistcoats, ornamented sword-hilts and sword-knots, red-heeled shoes, and snuff-boxes, littered every chair and table. The important work of dressing, however, had just been brought to a conclusion, and our pretty young gentleman stood surveying himself, with no small degree of complacency, in a mirror. He wore a green riding-frock, trimmed with silver-lace binding, and adorned with large cut-steel buttons, jockey boots, and neat buckskin breeches. His white woollen bobwig, such as young gentlemen of distinction wore when they mounted the coach-box, fitted his head as close as a nightcap; and perched on the top of it was a little three-cornered

L cocked-hat, styled a Nivernois hat, bound with gold lace, and decorated with a black Hanoverian cockade, to show that he had been in the army. At his side he wore a steel-hilted sword, inlaid with gold and decked with a knot of ribbons, and an amber-headed switch whip dangled from his wrist.

Thus equipped, Jimmy Hog, who deemed himself quite a jemmy fellow, as the phrase then was, started from his lodgings and directed his steps to the house of Bailie Lothian, in High Street, where Miss Flora Stewart was staying for some few weeks.

When he arrived there, he found that young lady seated in the drawing-room, in company with the Bailie's sister, Miss Lothian—who kept house for him, he being a bachelor—and an old acquaintance of that lady, with whom we also have lately made acquaintance, namely, the young wife of Dr. Glen. This lady, however, since her separation from the doctor, had resumed her maiden name, and styled herself Mrs. Dundas, an act which was not particularly

singular in Scotland, where a married woman does not so thoroughly, and on every occasion, renounce her patronymic as in England.

Mrs. Mary Dundas and Miss Flora Stewart were both clad in riding-habits.

Miss Stewart wore a habit of rich green Venetian satin, with a silver trimming of point d'Espagne. She was a very beautiful girl, with fine dark eyes and sunny-brown hair, which hung in wavy ringlets down to her waist, whilst a dainty little hat with white feather formed a very appropriate headdress.

Mrs. Mary Dundas wore a blue cloth habit, faced with white and edged with gold lace. Her hair was dressed in a more elaborate fashion, trussed and powdered and plastered with pomatum, and surmounted by a pink satin riding-hood, the lappets of which fell down the sides of her face like lappets on the sides of the face of an Egyptian mummy—a style of head-covering just then coming into fashion.

Miss Lothian, who was not going to ride,

was standing at a cupboard, with a bunch of keys in her hand, and laughing very heartily, as Mr. James Hog entered into the room.

‘Miss Stewart has been mighty diverted with Tam Neil,’ she said, as she advanced towards the young gentleman, with extended hand; ‘the droll creature! he is here doing a few odd jobs for me.’

‘Droll creature, indeed! I vow and protest he has made me laugh till my sides are sore,’ exclaimed the young lady; ‘but I must say, you have some mighty odd people in Edinburgh: there is Kincraigie, the Highland laird, who they say is daft, and who walks about with carved heads on the top of his stick, and everyone who meets him asks in broad Scotch, “Wha hae ye up the day, laird?” He had Lord Loudon up yesterday, and mighty odd my lord looked.’

And here Miss Stewart laughed merrily.

‘Yes, Lord Loudon is not a favourite of the laird’s, and he therefore caricatures him;

nor, for the matter of that, is his lordship a favourite of mine,' observed young Hog, shrugging his shoulders, 'for, but for his indecision and mismanagement, our campaign in America would not have turned out so badly. The laird, of course, rejoices at his loss of reputation, for they are enemies of old. You know the laird was out in '45, and Lord Loudon commanded some of the King's forces then.'

'I know,' replied Miss Stewart; 'and when my father was speaking of my lord's mismanagement in America, he said that he had done no better in '45, and that Prince Charles had driven him out of Inverness, and Lord Cromarty had forced him to disband his forces and take shelter in the Isle of Skye. But,' continued the young lady, tossing back her head in a coquettish manner, 'I admire Kincaigie vastly; they say he is a gentleman of consideration, and I vow and protest he is very handsome, and if he were not daft I would fall in love with him.'

'I never rejoiced in his misfortune until

now,' said young Hog, sighing and placing his hand on his heart.

‘Fie upon you, you hard-hearted creature!’ replied Miss Flora, tapping her lover on his arm with her riding-whip. ‘Poor Kincraigie!’ she said in a grave tone; ‘you must know that I have been accustomed to hear of him ever since I was quite a child. When my father lived in this town he was intimately acquainted with him, and had a great esteem for him.’

Here we may say a few words concerning the young lady’s father, Archibald Stewart, formerly Lord Provost of Edinburgh. He was regarded, at the time of the rising in favour of Prince Charles, with peculiar mistrust in consequence of the city having fallen into the hands of the Highland army, without resistance or any attempt at defence. The provost endured, soon after the defeat of the Prince at Culloden, a long and severe trial, in which it was shown, in the course of his defence, that the great extent and very dilapidated condition of the city walls, as well as the

manifest lukewarmness of a very large portion of the inhabitants towards the reigning family, rendered the defence of the town, for any length of time, against a victorious army, quite impossible. The trial lasted from the 27th of October till the 2nd of November, when the provost was acquitted by an unanimous verdict of the jury. A short time afterwards, Provost Stewart went to London, where, meeting with the support of the Jacobite party, he became a banker, and realized a considerable fortune.

‘I propose, Miss Flora, that we should ride to Newliston this morning and surprise my father with a visit,’ said Mr. James Hog. ‘It is a beautiful day, and a ride in that direction will be as pleasant as in any other.’

‘Oh, by all means; there is nothing I should like better,’ replied the young lady; ‘but we will wait a few minutes. I want to see Tam Neil again.’

‘Provided he has not got his bass fiddle with him,’ said Mrs. Dundas.

‘I did not know Tam was a musician as well as a singer,’ observed young Hog, a remark which caused all the three ladies to laugh very heartily.

‘Have you not heard how Tam could not pay his reckoning at an inn at Duddingston?’ said Miss Lothian, still laughing.

‘La, Mr. James, I thought everyone knew that tale. After he had drunk the landlady’s good ale, he found out that he had nothing in his pockets; and as the good woman would not let him go without paying, he told her he would leave her the case of his bass fiddle as a pledge, and then and there he tumbled a coffin out of the bag. ‘Twas Charlie Macdonald told us the story.’

‘Is that the young gentleman I see so often with Kincraigie?’ asked Miss Stewart.

‘He is vastly handsome, and to my mind he is something like the busts I have seen of Prince Charlie.’

‘I cannot say I ever observed the slightest resemblance,’ remarked Mr. James Hog rather snappishly.

‘Have you not? Well, I am surprised at that,’ replied Miss Flora, who seemed mischievously intent on tormenting her lover. ‘I vow and protest that the young gentleman has just the same noble but melancholy cast of countenance.’

‘My dear Miss Stewart, if you talk in this way you will reduce Mr. Hog to despair,’ said Mrs. Dundas, with a simper. ‘I vow, my dear, this is the third gentleman in whom you have avowed an interest to-day.’

‘Pardon me, you are making a mistake, madam,’ exclaimed James Hog, more tartly than before. ‘Tam Neil is a very respectable coffin-maker and precentor, but sure, you would not call Tam a gentleman; and as to Mr. Charles Macdonald, well,’ he added, shrugging his shoulders, ‘he is only the grandson of a tavern-keeper at Inverness.’

‘Heyday, that says nothing,’ replied Miss Stewart, still bent on teasing her lover; ‘for I have often heard my father say that he knew more than one landlord

of a Highland inn who was nearly related to the chief of a clan.'

Before the young lover could reply to his charmer's last remark, the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Tam Neil himself, who had come to repair the lock of the cupboard.

'Tam, before you begin to work, I should like Miss Stewart to hear you sing,' said Miss Lothian, addressing him in a most coaxing manner.

'Pray do, Mr. Neil; I should vastly like to hear you,' urged Miss Flora, in her most insinuating tones.

Tam, unable to resist these flattering appeals, at once complied with the request of the fair petitioners, and seating himself in a chair, he wrapped a handkerchief over his head, and with his lips compressed, and his long chin set prominently forward, delighted his auditors by singing one of his favourite songs, 'The Old Wife.' His imitation of the querulous voice of age was quite inimitable.

When the applause and laughter of

the company had somewhat subsided, Miss Stewart observed, that for her part, she marvelled that so clever a man as Mr. Neil should follow so dismal a calling as that of an undertaker, when he might make a small fortune as a public singer.

‘I can assure you, my dear, that Mr. Neil makes a mighty pretty fortune as it is,’ observed Miss Lothian gaily.

‘My service to you, miss; ’tis the first I hae heerd o’t,’ replied Tam.

‘Well, you’ll not convince me that you don’t, Mr. Neil; considering the extravagant price people of your profession always charge for coffins,’ said Miss Lothian. ‘I vow, I have often wondered why this should be so.’

‘I sudna mind naming the secret if there were nae leddies present,’ replied Tam, looking archly round; ‘but in the present company ’twad scarce be safe to trust sae important a secret.’

‘I vow you are vastly rude, Mr. Neil,’ said Mrs. Dundas; ‘but pray, do tell us, and we’ll be as silent as the grave.’

‘After sic a professional allusion as that,’ replied the coffin-maker, amidst the laughter of the company, ‘I canna langer refuse, and I’ll e’en disclose the secret; but I maun first ask for a wee matter o’ a guid glass o’ Athol brose.’

The guid glass o’ Athol brose was at once sent for, and when Tam had drained it to the bottom and wiped his lips, he placed his forefinger on the side of his nose, and said very deliberately: ‘Noo, leddies, gin ye want to ken why we charge sae mickle for coffins, it’s just because they are ne’er brought back to be mended.’

Tam’s jest was so well received that it earned for him another guid glass o’ Athol brose; and then Mrs. Dundas and Miss Flora Stewart, escorted by Mr. James Hog, prepared to set forth on their ride, their horses being in waiting at the door.

The three equestrians had already ridden about half-way on the road to Newliston, when they perceived at a little distance a carriage advancing towards them, which, somewhat to Mr. James Hog’s vexation,

he discovered to be that of his honoured sire.

‘And there is that dear, funny creature, Kincraigie, too, riding beside it along with Mr. Witham,’ exclaimed Miss Stewart.

‘I knew they were staying at Newliston,’ said James Hog, looking sorely vexed, ‘but I thought they had left yesterday. I will ask my father to return home again.’

‘Oh, la, I protest, Mr. James! No, no, on no account. We will turn back and accompany him to town,’ said Miss Flora.

‘I will ride up to the coach first,’ exclaimed young Hog hurriedly; and then, with a perplexed and almost angry look on his face, he added, ‘Sdeath, I cannot think what is taking my father to town to-day.’

By this time the coachman having recognised Mr. James, and knowing that his master was very short-sighted, drove the carriage close up to the equestrian party, and then stopped his horses.

‘What a strange noise,’ remarked Miss Stewart, and the remark was not out of

place, for certainly very strange sounds were issuing from the carriage.

‘I vow ‘tis like the gobbling of a turkey,’ observed Mrs. Dundas.

At this juncture Kincraigie and Tony Witham rode up to offer their compliments to the ladies.

‘Your father is just on his way to market, James,’ said the laird, addressing young Hog, with a sly twinkle in his eye.

‘Good heavens! what a mischance!’ exclaimed the latter, his looks expressing both anger and mortification; ‘and Miss Stewart with me, too!’ he added, as if unmindful of the presence of that young lady. ‘Zounds! I marvel how he can thus disgrace me and himself!’ Then, boiling over with vexation as he reined his horse up to the carriage-door, he popped his head in at the window, but had no sooner done so, than he uttered a cry of rage and pain.*

‘Oh, lud! what is the matter?’ asked both the ladies in tones of alarm.

* Kay’s ‘Portraits and Biographical Sketches.’

‘Tis that deil o’ a bubbly-jock * hath grippit James by the neb,’ † replied the laird, who commanded a more favourable view of the situation than anyone else. ‘I hae seen beau-traps, as we ca’ loose paving-stanes, and a pretty fellow strutting along the streets, after a shower o’ rain, unknowingly step on to ane, and gar a’ the dirty water under it squirt up ower his braw shoon and silk stockings ; but, by my saul, I never till noo saw sic a beau-trap as this ! But come, Tony, we maun gang to the rescue,’ added the laird, trying hard to suppress his laughter at the ludicrous sight, ‘ or the confounded bird will bite oor puir freend’s neb off his face.’

By this time, however, Mr. Hog’s servants had rescued his son and heir from his painful and ridiculous position, whilst Mrs. Mary Dundas exclaimed, in a tone of supreme contempt :

‘ My dear Miss Stewart, I vow and protest that the man is as mean and parsimonious as my wretch, Dr. Glen. I have

* *Bubbly-jock*, i.e. turkey-cock. † *Neb*, nose.

been told that, amongst other economical habits, he disposes of his own poultry, and that for fear he should be cheated, he superintends the trade himself, and brings them to market in his carriage; but I never believed the story until now.'



CHAPTER III.

REJOICINGS.

THE close of the year 1762 was marked by a severe frost of long-continued duration.

The broad waters of the Thames were frozen over above London Bridge, and the ice-bound river presented a gay spectacle. Booths were erected and fairs held, to which the inhabitants of the great city, young and old, flocked in crowds, whilst carriages and other vehicles now superseded, as a means of conveyance across the river, the boats, which lay idle, drawn up high and dry on the shore.

Below the bridge the prospect was melancholy enough. Large blocks of ice floating up and down with the tide, their

jagged edges fraying, and in many cases severing the cables of the ships riding at anchor, and being thus set adrift, many of them were driven on the banks and became partial wrecks.

The ice on the river was six feet thick, and the navigation being stopped, thousands of watermen with their families were plunged into the deepest distress, and these, joining contingents of frozen-out fishermen, lightermen, and gardeners, patrolled the now gloomy and desolate streets of the great metropolis, imploring, in doleful snatches of song, the charity of their more favoured fellow-citizens. Nor were their sad prayers unheard or unresponded to. From public as well as private sources money flowed in liberally. The naked were clothed, and the hungry fed, and Englishmen, not now for the first time, showed that true spirit of tender charity and benevolence, which has so deep root in their hearts, though, indeed, often veiled by unprepossessing manners and bluntness of speech.

Still, dark and dreary were those days of the frost, each one marked by the discovery of some hapless wretch frozen to death in the streets, or on the ice-covered river ; whilst seagulls, uttering their mournful cries, came up as high as London itself ; and birds driven from their usual haunts, were seen in great numbers in many of its thoroughfares.

At length, towards the end of the first month of the new year, the frost gave, and along with more favourable weather came happier times for the people of England. Thus, although in a very few weeks winter set in again with heavy snowstorms and fierce gales of wind, it did not cause public rejoicing to cease, for on the 10th of the month of February of this auspicious year of grace 1763, a defensive treaty between his Britannic Majesty, the most Christian King, and the Kings of Spain and Portugal, had been concluded at Paris.

From all parts of the country came addresses of congratulation and thanks to the young King on the occasion of this treaty

of peace, which had brought to a termination a costly and sanguinary war of seven years' duration.

‘Here shall be,’ says the first article of this welcome treaty, ‘a Christian, universal, and perpetual peace, as well by sea as by land, and a sincere and constant friendship shall be established between their Britannic, most Christian, Catholic, and faithful Majesties, and between their heirs and successors.’

Could these high contracting powers have seen into a not very distant future, one might have supposed that their solemn declaration of a perpetual and Christian peace and constant friendship had been composed and written in grim irony! History tells us how long this universal peace lasted.

Two years had now elapsed since the death of George II., an event which had happened very inopportunely for his German allies, but at a juncture very fortunate for his own memory. He died when the nation was intoxicated with the success of

their arms in the Western Continent and in the East. Canada also had been completely conquered from the French, and Colonel Coote had gained splendid victories over them in the East Indies.

These successes dazzled for awhile the people of England, and blinded them to the fatal effects of the partiality of the deceased King, and of the first George also, to their petty German Electorate, to which not only the treasure, but the blood, the valour, the virtue and the public spirit of the British nation had repeatedly been recklessly sacrificed.

The aggrandizement of this darling German province, and the support of schemes for preserving an imaginary balance between the Continental powers, whatever might be the cost to England, were the only conditions on which any ministry could obtain the favour of the two first Georges, and, unfortunately for the interests and welfare of the country, men were found venal enough and ready enough to be bribed into the measures of those monarchs, by the grati-

fication of avarice or the fascinating allurements of ambition.

Thus it was that at the death of George II., his youthful grandson, George III., found himself involved in a costly and sanguinary war, out of which it would be difficult for him to extricate his kingdom. But even then, the belligerents had so greatly exhausted their resources and treasure, that they were unable to prosecute the war on so grand a scale as they could wish, and had begun to talk of philanthropy and lament the horrors of war. Still, they continued to carry it on with what resources yet remained to them, sometimes to the advantage of one side, sometimes of the other.

At last, however, the end came, the long war was brought to a termination, and one happy result of the peace was, that the further accumulation of the already frightful debt England had incurred might cease, for she was now disengaged from her onerous obligations to lavish enormous sums in subsidizing the Great Frederick of Prussia

and other German princes to fight for their own dominions.

Small wonder was it, then, that there arose a cry of rejoicing over the peace from people of every class, hoping, as they did, that their youthful sovereign, himself born in England, and, unlike his two predecessors, speaking the English tongue, would not, like them, plunge his native country into costly wars about German quarrels. Addresses, expressing congratulations and thanks, were sent to the King, from the metropolis and from every city and town, from every country village and hamlet, and, in short, from every nook and corner of our seagirt island.

Nor was Westmoreland among the last of the counties to show how highly the blessings of peace were valued ; for even so soon as the 19th of February, her loyal inhabitants sent up a fervent address of congratulation to the King.

At Birkswick, the old home of the Withams, there was rejoicing of a twofold kind—one, over the advent of peace ; the

other, on the coming of age of the young squire.

Spite of the season of the year and the late intense frosts, friends from far and near came to Birkswick to celebrate the happy event. Kincraigie, Mr. Roger Hog, and Charlie Macdonald were among the guests at the old Manor House. They had taken advantage of the thaw and milder weather at the beginning of the month, and Mr. Hog, with an eye, as usual, to economy, had succeeded in hiring a return post-chaise from Edinburgh to Carlisle, which had been advertised in the *Courant* of that day, as having 'four able horses ;' 'for,' said this careful gentleman, 'if we travel by the stage-coach, or flying-machine, as they call it, we shall be three or four days on the way.' But from Carlisle to Birkswick the party were forced to be guilty of the extravagance, as Mr. Hog deemed it, of hiring specially a post-chaise, and they had, moreover, to suffer the dislocation, almost, of their bones, in jolting over execrable high-roads.

The weather had again changed for the worse, and there had been a very heavy fall of snow soon after the arrival of the Edinburgh guests at Birkswick. In many parts of the country the high winds that also prevailed had caused the snow to drift, so that in the valleys it lay very deep, and in narrow lanes rose to the tops of the hedges. Shepherds and others told how the snow, even in the open roads, lay at least eight feet deep. About Appleby and Kirby Stephen old folks shook their heads, and said that such a fall had not been within their memory.

Travelling had now become a matter of the most serious difficulty, either on horseback or by coach, for in some places the turnpike-gates could not be opened, and in others the snow lay in drifts higher than the horses' backs. As to the Scotch visitors there seemed every likelihood of their being weather-bound for some time to come, a prospect highly satisfactory to all the family at the Manor House.

Tony rejoiced in the society of the friends

of his boyhood, Kinraigie and Charlie Macdonald ; and Captain Edmondston found the sojourn in the country he had so much dreaded very endurable, although he could not play his favourite game of piquet for such high stakes as he had played for in the great London chocolate-houses, seeing that, chiefly to please him, parties were made for games of whist and ombre, and also for the two then very fashionable games of commerce and chance. The gallant Captain was so far satisfied with these arrangements, that he even submitted, with a good grace, to the very low stakes which, mainly at the suggestion of Mr. Hog, had been fixed to be played for ; nay, he would even laugh when that gentleman would exclaim, in a sarcastic and sententious manner, as he thrust his hands in his breeches-pockets :

‘ I say that it is a most useful kind of learning to be skilled in all the niceties of games, and to know how to circumvent an adversary, and that those gentlemen who possess the science should be applauded, and called by the name of great “ connois-

seurs"—not by the ugly name which vulgar people give them.'

As for Winnie, she had been very sad and pensive of late, for a reason the reader may, perhaps, divine ; but the old colour came back to her cheek, the light to her soft eyes, and the smile to her lip, from the time that Charlie Macdonald set foot, for the first time, in the old Manor House at Birkswick. For a while Mrs. Edmondston had fought strenuously with her son against the advent of this one particular visitor. Let us give their conversation in their own words :

‘ No, Tony, with my consent, young Macdonald shall never meet Winnie again. After a separation for a while, she will conquer this foolish attachment.’

‘ But if her heart break in the process ?’ asked Tony. Then he added, with a thoughtful look in his eyes, most unlike their wonted mirthful expression : ‘ Mother, I may not always be here, and you would be sore of heart to lose us both.’

‘ Bless my heart, child, how you do talk !

Lack-a-day, I have enough to trouble me already, without your hinting at such a mortal affliction as your death would be to me.'

'No ; you mistake me, mother. I am not going to break my neck over a five-barred gate yet,' said Tony, with a merry laugh. 'I was speaking in riddles.'

'Well, well, Tony, I would rather you would speak plain, and then I can understand you,' replied Mrs. Edmondston pettishly. 'I will tell you, at once, I shall be ill pleased if you insist on having Charlie here. I vow and protest that I am sorry for him, and sorry for my child too ; but a match betwixt them is quite out of the question, seeing that Winnie will have but a very moderate fortune, and that he hath at present less.'

'An the lack of fortune be your only objection, my dear mother, that may be removed sooner than you think.'

'Oh la ! you are talking in riddles again, Tony. You are vastly stupid to-day, and if you urge me any more I vow I

will leave Birkswick, and carry Winnie with me.'

'No, you will not,' replied Tony gaily. 'I shall have my own way, my dearest mother. You know you cannot refuse anything to your wilful son.'

And Tony had his way. His mother yielded, but, as she vowed and protested, with sore misgivings and with a troubled heart; and, indeed, a weight of trouble—to judge by her anxious face, as she sits in company with Mr. Roger Hog, on the eve of her dear son's coming of age, in the large old rambling library of the Manor House—seems to have settled down upon her, since those happy days in Edinburgh, which had preceded her marriage with Captain Edmondston.

The snow had ceased falling, and the sun, a lurid red, emerging from behind the piled-up masses of grey cloud, cast a passing radiance over the wintry landscape. All the company, save Mr. Hog, had gone with Tony and his sisters to Kirby Stephen to see the preparations for the festivities

for the ensuing birthday ; but as for the owner of Newliston, he was growing rather corpulent, with years, and preferred remaining at his ease in the library, to stumbling along the narrow path, in the snow, which led from the Manor House to the little town. But still, all enjoyments have their drawbacks, and as Mr. Hog had prepared for a comfortable nap, induced by the excellent red port he had imbibed at dinner, and the warmth of the fire, Mrs. Edmondston broke in upon him with a doleful face, representing a catalogue of woes to be poured into his friendly, but, just then, reluctant and unwilling ears.



CHAPTER IV.

A BUDGET OF TROUBLES.

‘Oh la ! Mr. Hog ; have I disturbed you ? I am mighty afraid I have. You were going to sleep, and I dare say you like an afternoon’s nap now.’

‘No, no, my dear madam ; I had no such intention,’ replied Mr. Hog, assuming an air of virtuous denial, but speaking rather sharply from two motives—firstly, to show Mrs. Edmondston that he was wide awake ; and secondly, because he felt vexed at his fair friend’s last remark, which seemed to imply that she thought he was getting old, and this is an insinuation palatable to very few amongst us.

‘Well, I will stay with you, then,’ re-

plied Mrs. Edmondston, seating herself on the other side of the broad fireplace, so that she commanded a full view of her friend; ‘and I shall be glad of an hour’s quiet conversation, for I have a mighty deal to tell you.’

With an air of stolid resignation, seeing that all hopes of his afternoon nap had gone, Mr. Hog sat bolt upright on his high-backed armchair, and awaited his fair friend’s communications.

Mrs. Edmondston, however, seemed in no great hurry to begin, but sat watching, with a mournful expression of countenance, the broad tongues of flame which shot up the capacious chimney, the bright reflection from the blazing logs casting a ruddy glow on the quaint figures of men, women, trees, and houses painted on the glazed Dutch tiles which lined either side of the wide fireplace. At last, after a silence of more than a minute, she suddenly exclaimed :

‘Oh, Mr. Hog, I vow and protest I am a most miserable creature! Lack-a-day, what a world it is!’

At the tone of her voice, Mr. Hog's head made a sudden bob forward, which might have led to the suspicion that he had certainly been napping. However, if this were indeed the case, Mrs. Edmondston failed to perceive it, for her eyes were dim with tears.

'Why, I say, what's the matter, Mary?' asked Mr. Hog, in a tone of real concern. 'In tears, my dear madam, and this on the eve of Tony's coming of age! Nay, whatever cause you may have for anxiety, I say you should dismiss it from your mind for the present, at least.'

'I have much more than one cause—I have many. 'Tis not enough, it seems, that I should suffer from my husband's reckless conduct, but Tony and Winnie seem in league to add to my affliction. I vow and protest I am nigh distracted, what with one thing and what with another. Really the Captain's extravagance knows no bounds. Not long ago he lost a bet of 500 guineas at Ascot on Lord Grosvenor's horse Hickress, though, to be

sure, he won 300 at the Newmarket second meeting, when his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland's horse Sultan beat the Duke of Bridgewater's Boreas. It is quite shocking ! And then, that White's Chocolate House in St. James's is a dreadful gambling-place. I vow and protest that we should have been utterly beggared and ruined if I had not got him away from London. You must have seen what a love he hath for high play.'

'Aye, indeed ; no one can fail to perceive that,' replied Mr. Hog very emphatically. 'But, my dear madam, you were aware of his propensity for gaming before you was wed to him, so it's no use regretting the step now.'

'Oh la, sir, pray don't mistake me,' said the lady, drying her eyes and speaking a little tartly. 'I love my dear husband too well ever to regret having married him ; nay, I vow I love him so deeply,' she added in a tone of lofty enthusiasm, 'that I would willingly walk barefoot through the streets and beg for him.'

‘Vastly pretty sentiments. I’ fackins, I commend you, my dear madam,’ said Hog, with a sarcastic smile; ‘however, I hope your love may never be put to so severe a test. As to Captain Edmondston, you spoke in such severe terms of his extravagance, that I thought his conduct had, perhaps, weakened your affection, and that you were going to lay a statement of all your grievances before me. But, I say, ma’am, in any case, I should not have interfered ’twixt man and wife—nay, I wouldn’t so much as even have said one word in his disparagement; no, no,’ he added, with a chuckle, ‘I am rather too old in this world’s ways for that; an I had done so, you would have fallen out with me straight-away for agreeing with you in your own fault-finding of him. Adad, I have no inclination to raise a hornets’ nest about my ears.’

‘I don’t take this kindly of you, Mr. Hog,’ said Mrs. Edmondston, with some asperity; ‘to show so little sympathy with my distress as to make a jest of it.’

‘I say, my dear Mrs. Edmondston, I never was farther from jesting,’ exclaimed Mr. Hog promptly; ‘but I certainly have been much mistaken, for I thought when you began you was going to complain of your husband.’

‘La, no, dear sir! he is so tender, so devoted! I vow he is as ardent in his love as he was in the days of our courtship.’

‘Then I say you must prize him as a paragon of a husband, for he is an exception to the general class of fashionable gentlemen. You know, my dear madam,’ said Mr. Hog, smiling and nodding his head, ‘that the rules of polite society, nowadays, do not allow a man to love his wife; a fine gentleman would think he had lost all his reputation, if he were suspected of such a weakness. Why, ma’am, some fine gentlemen are so scrupulous, that they will not even love their mistresses, and they make their valets write their love-letters for fear the lady should be able to show them. So I say, my dear madam, that it seems to me you are tormenting yourself for nothing.’

‘Do you call it nothing, sir, that I have sacrificed all my savings and a large sum left to me by my dear first husband?’ exclaimed Mrs. Edmondston, once more relapsing into grief and irritation, justly provoked, we must admit, by this bantering speech of her old friend. ‘I vow and protest, sir,’ she continued, as she fluttered her fan rapidly in her vexation, ‘I have not a shilling left, and I have been often so reduced that I have more than once thought to ask you to let me forestall the income before the end of the half year.’

‘I say I should never have done it, Mary,’ said Mr. Hog, speaking very energetically and almost starting from his chair. ‘Your late husband, Mr. Witham, placed so much confidence in me as to appoint me one of your trustees, and I say I will be faithful to the trust whatever may be the consequence; and as long as I live I shall watch over your interests and those of your children, and I’ll not suffer you to be quite ruined, an I can help it, by the thoughtlessness of the husband you have

married. 'Twill be for the good of both of you.'

'Sure, I am a most unhappy creature,' sobbed Mrs. Edmondston. 'Who could ever think that you would show yourself so hard-hearted, just when I am in such need of comfort! I vow and protest, it almost makes me hesitate, whether or not I shall carry out my plan of coming to settle in Edinburgh again, for perhaps, an you were to show yourself so cruel to me, you and Edmondston will be quarrelling and calling each other out.'

'Adad, my dear madam, you may dismiss that idea from your head,' said Mr. Hog. 'I am no pretty fellow or young blood, nor are you a young miss in her teens, that there should be any danger of an affair of honour, as they call it, between your husband and me. If you are minded to come again to Edinburgh, come. But I say, an you wish to keep the Captain from the gaming-table, you had best stay at Appleby.'

'At Appleby!' exclaimed Mrs. Edmond-

ston, in a tone of surprise; ‘la, Mr. Hog, how you talk ! My husband would never consent to live there. Oh lud ! how could a gentleman sit smoking and drinking with country doctors, and lawyers, and parsons, who, I vow and protest, are mighty clownish !’

‘ You are mighty hard upon country society,’ interposed Mr. Hog, laughing.

‘ And then the squire and two or three gentleman sots, who live upon their incomes, as it is called,’ continued Mrs. Edmondston, with a contemptuous toss of her head, ‘ would sit in judgment on the fine gentleman, and find him guilty of being a London Cockney, and not being able to clear a five-bar gate, and not keeping a pipe of strong red port wine, and therefore not worthy to be a member of their jolly party. I vow and protest Captain Edmondston would enjoy all this mighty well ! What do you think, sir ?’

‘ Adad, I rather think as you do,’ replied Mr. Hog, laughing.

‘ And as for Winnie, poor girl,’ resumed

Mrs. Edmondston, ‘probably some Miss Prim, of a certain age, may inspect her, and then favour the parson’s wife and daughters with her opinion, and say, “La, my dears, some people think she is handsome ; she seems good-natured, but as to beauty—oh lud ! Her features are regular enough, and some think her eyes fine ; but la, my dears, she is so awkward, so simple —but I do not choose to say more.’

‘ I say, my dear madam, you will kill me with laughing,’ exclaimed Hog.

‘ But to be serious,’ continued Mrs. Edmondston, in a grave tone, ‘ Appleby might be a desirable place on Winnie’s account, after all, for us to remain in.’

Here Mr. Hog raised his eyebrows and looked inquiringly at his companion.

‘ Yes, Mr. Hog,’ she went on to say, ‘ Appleby might be very advantageous for Winnie. You see, if we go to Edinburgh, she will often come in contact with Charlie Macdonald, and so their foolish love affair will be kept up. I vow and protest that I am quite provoked when I think of the

splendid chances the child now throws away. She has had three offers already since we came down here.'

'The devil she has!' exclaimed Mr. Hog, in a tone which expressed both astonishment and doubt.

'Yes, indeed, Mr. Hog. I vow and protest, my dear sir, it quite reminds me of my own conquests,' and here the lady spread out her fan before her face. 'I declare I had a host of admirers before I accepted Captain Edmondston.'

'Adad, I hope Winnie will be fortunate in her choice, and not go through the wood and pick up a crooked stick at last,' exclaimed Mr. Hog abruptly.

'I have told you that the child has had three offers since we came down here,' said Mrs. Edmondston, wisely ignoring Mr. Hog's ungallant insinuation with regard to herself. 'She is becoming quite a celebrated toast, like I was.'

'Then I say suitors must be as plentiful as blackberries,' replied Mr. Hog. 'So, so, Miss Winnie,' he added, laughing; 'we

may expect to hear that you are making the whole county a thousand times drunk in toasting you, and have been the cause of a dozen duels. But she really is a charming young creature, my dear madam. May I ask who these admirers are ?'

This question was asked in a tone of some incredulity, which, however, Mrs. Edmondston thought proper not to notice.

'There's the eldest son of Sir John Ramsden, one of our members for Appleby,' she said, checking Winnie's suitors off on her fingers, 'a fine, handsome young fellow, who quite adores her ; and young Squire Musgrave—you know the Musgraves of Hartley Castle, not far from here—'twas love at first sight with him, I could see ; and John Dalston, the county member, he is dying for her, and I know he would have proposed yesterday, but the naughty girl would not give him the chance. I consider it positively cruel on her part to behave in this manner, when she knows how anxious I am to see her well married, now that, through the poor Captain's

imprudence, the fortune I shall have to leave my girls is so much lessened. Now, do you not agree with me, Mr. Hog, that Winnie is vastly to blame in setting up her judgment against mine in this matter? She is both wrong and foolish.'

'Maybe so, ma'am; but I say this plaguy affair, love, makes fools of many wise folk, young and old—I say you yourself, for example, when you married Captain Edmondston.'

'La, I protest I am vastly obliged to you, sir,' replied the lady, tossing her head indignantly; 'but I see that you would rather encourage Winnie in her folly, and therefore I shall say nothing to you about Tony, as the cause I have for complaint with each is the same.'

'I say, ma'am, has Tony had three offers?' asked Mr. Hog, with an air of great gravity.

'If it amuses you to make a jest of my sorrows, pray do, sir,' said Mrs. Edmondston, with an air of great severity; 'but——'

Here the lady's reproaches were cut short by the entrance of a servant, announcing Major Wharton.

'You cannot fail to perceive my distress, sir,' said Mrs. Edmondston, applying the handkerchief to her eyes, after the usual compliments had passed between herself and Mr. Hog and the Major, and addressing that gentleman as soon as he was seated; 'and as you are a friend of so many years' standing, I need not hesitate to speak before you what afflicts me. My son and my daughter Winnie are just now a source of great trouble.'

'Indeed, madam, I am very sorry to hear this,' replied Major Wharton, with an air of concern. 'I always thought you were very happy in your children.'

'Oh, they are most loving and affectionate,' answered Mrs. Edmondston; 'but nevertheless they both give me a vast deal of anxiety.'

'I am sorry for that,' replied Major Wharton.

'Of course,' continued Mrs. Edmondston,

‘I am most desirous to see Winnie settled in life, and yet she refuses splendid offers, and encourages a romantic passion for the son of an obscure innkeeper ; and as for Tony, I cannot understand him at all. His moods have lately been so variable. He is certainly as gay and merry as ever ; but still, he now often shuts himself up for hours in this library, poring over musty old volumes, sometimes till far on in the night. And then, every now and then, he absents himself, never tells me where he is going, and returns as suddenly as he departs. All this is very strange.’

‘Tis to be hoped he is not wooing some maiden of low degree,’ said Mr. Hog, in jesting tone.

‘Bless my heart, sir, do not suggest such a calamity !’ exclaimed Mrs. Edmondston, stricken with horror at the thought of her son, too, so far ignoring his rank and position in society. ‘I vow ’twould be far worse folly than Winifred’s about Charlie Macdonald, and that is bad enough.’

‘What about Charlie Macdonald ?’ asked

Major Wharton abruptly. ‘Pray where does he come from? He hath all the air and manners of a gentleman of sense and breeding.’

‘Truly I do not deny that Charlie is everything that is polite and genteel, and hath both wit and intelligence,’ replied Mrs. Edmondston, ‘and I esteem him most highly; indeed, I believe I could bring myself to overlook his want of fortune, if he were only a gentleman by birth; but I vow and protest I never could allow my daughter to wed a man of low origin.’

‘May I inquire what is his origin?’ asked Major Wharton.

‘His grandfather keeps a tavern at Inverness, and his father was killed at the battle of Culloden,’ replied Mrs. Edmondston. ‘I have often heard the young man tell how he remembers a party of English officers coming to his grandfather’s house a few hours after the battle, though he was then only five years old.’

‘And he was quite right,’ said Major

Wharton abruptly, 'for I myself was one of those very officers. 'Twas a dreadful victory, and I hope never to see such another. I well remember the little boy, and how frightened he was at us. Poor child! I never expected to renew my acquaintance with him again, when he should have grown up to manhood. But as to your son's singular actions, my dear madam,' added the Major in a jesting tone, 'I would not, were I you, pay too much attention to them, so as to seem to spy his movements. Depend on't, whatever be the cause, 'tis not that which Mr. Hog just now hinted at: poring over musty books for hours does not accord with the wooing of a maiden of low degree.'



CHAPTER V.

COMING OF AGE.

THE morning of the twenty-first birthday of Anthony Witham, Esquire, for we must give him his proper title on the occasion, was ushered in by a somewhat heavy fall of snow, which ceased, however, towards mid-day; and though the piled-up masses of yellow clouds indicated a further fall, the sun shone out, tinging the wintry landscape with a lurid glow, as a gay party of gentlemen and ladies emerged from the large oaken doorway of Birkswick Manor House.

This goodly gathering consisted of the young squire, his stepfather, his mother and sisters, and many friends. Amongst the latter was Kincraigie, bearing aloft a

stick with the heads carved in wood of the two Members of Parliament for Appleby fixed upon it. Marvellous likenesses they were, and they had already gained the plaudits of the Westmoreland gentry who formed the majority of the guests at Birkswick.

The company were all equipped so as to defy the inclemencies of the weather, and they soon arrived at a large tent, erected on the outskirts of Kirby Stephen, where Tony was to meet his tenantry, and which was crowded with people when the party from the Manor House arrived. In the little town itself all was gaiety and excitement, no one was working : the stocking-weavers had taken a holiday, the church-bells had been set ringing, the children had been let free from school—and, in short, old and young all seemed pretty well bent upon enjoyment ; and what with bonfires, sheep and oxen roasted whole, and casks of ale broached freely, and distributed to all comers, this coming of age of young Squire Witham promised to go off right royally.

In the tent, meanwhile, Tony was being toasted and greeted with rounds of British cheers ; but the genuine friendly feeling evinced towards him formed, in his estimation, the brightest feature in the day's proceedings.

This was the more striking, because the family were no longer very wealthy, or possessed of any great influence in the county. It was a spontaneous tribute of honest, outspoken affection for the descendant of an ancient house, settled for generations at Birkswick. Some such reflections as these were, perhaps, passing through Tony's mind as he rose to his feet to respond to the speech of one of the oldest tenants on his estate, which had concluded with the words :

‘ May you live long amongst us ; and may Birkswick never be without a Witham for its master.’

Three times Tony essayed to speak, and three times the words died away on his lips, and he seemed overpowered by some uncontrollable emotion, which was set down to

various causes—bashfulness, nervousness, timidity, all of which feelings, however, were somewhat foreign to Tony's careless and easy disposition.

‘The dear lad is ill, I am afraid,’ murmured Mrs. Edmondston, full of motherly concern.

‘I say, an he had taken my advice,’ observed Mr. Hog, ‘he would have drunk ale this morning; which, to my mind, is better for a young fellow than that French wash called claret, that your husband loves for no other reason that I can tell than because it is high-priced.’

At this moment, however, a ‘Hush!’ ran round the assembly, for Tony Witham had found his voice at last; and though his was no brilliant oratory, no prepared speech, yet every word seemed to sink deep into the hearts of his auditors, and was treasured up in after-years, when the memory of the cheery and genial young squire was but like a dream of the past in the homes of the farmers and cottars on the Birkswick estate. Mrs. Edmondston

felt both proud and happy at her son's successful *début*.

The guests at the Manor House remained for a while to witness the sports and pastimes of the young farmers and peasantry, some joining in games of football, and others, after having cleared away the snow for a ring, making up wrestling matches.

The Westmoreland lads being celebrated for good wrestling, this sport attracted the most notice, and never, perhaps, was more wrestling science witnessed. Many were the falls given and received, and many a noted wrestler measured his length on the ground.

‘Better sport was never seen!’ exclaims one admiring Westmoreland squire.

‘That was a mighty good throw!’ observes another squire.

‘They are braw chiels—they are pretty lads!’ cries out Kincraigie, whose weakness had been before explained to the company. ‘I wus we had had a regiment o’ them wi’ us when we were fechting for King James.’
And braw lads they were indeed, and

made a fine display of excellent wrestling, the light weights not hesitating to contend with the heavy weights.

Young Rickerby, of Kirby, a light weight, surprised everyone by the manner in which he disposed of men far heavier than himself. He struggled so vigorously with Warwick, a man so much superior in strength, that it was feared he had spoiled himself for the rest of the sport ; but by a dexterous movement the light man tripped his heavy antagonist, and many were the exclamations, 'What science !' 'What cleverness against sheer strength !' But Rickerby himself was so much exhausted with his exertions that he fainted clean away.

In such like sports the day wore on : the young squire's guests, however, preferred to withdraw before they came to an end, and return to the Manor House. There, Mrs. Edmondston would have liked her son to bestow his smiles and his pleasant flow of talk with a little more partiality than he did do. Even Mr. Hog, who had jeered at Mrs. Edmondston's

account of Tony's being wooed by the ladies, could not but perceive how Miss Wilson's eyes glistened when he addressed himself to her, and wished that his young friend would pay more particular attention to the sole child and heiress of Edward Wilson, Esq., the wealthy county member.

In the ball-room, again, Mrs. Edmondston would have her son devote himself exclusively to the heiress; but though he danced with more pleasure and energy than he had ever before shown, he did not devote himself especially to Miss Wilson, for he selected more than one forlorn damsels as his partner, who otherwise would have been fain quietly to look on at the exhilarating diversion instead of joining in it.

The ball-room was, in fact, the hall of the **Manor House**. On ordinary occasions its walls, panelled with dark oak, and its long narrow casements, shrouded in ivy, and only admitting a subdued light, gave it a somewhat gloomy appearance; but on this festive night the spacious old chamber presented a far different aspect. Huge logs

blazed and crackled on the broad hearth, the reflection from the leaping flames, as they shot up the yawning chimney, together with the large branches of wax candles fixed in sconces attached to the walls, over the heads of the company, shed golden streams of light all around, chasing the shadows from every dusky nook and corner, and causing the evergreens, with which the spacious hall was tastily decorated, to glitter and shine, and gilding the steel breastplate and helmet and gleaming arms arranged over the capacious fireplace, relics of a brave Witham, who had fallen fighting for his sovereign on the fatal field of Mars-ton Moor. Merrily sounded the strains of gay music from sprightly fiddle and echoing harp, from bass fiddle and from soft flute, issuing from the first landing-place, where the musicians had been stationed, and charming and captivating the guests, now with the melody of the slow majestic Louvre dance or stately minuet, and then of the lively rigadoon reel or cotillon, while the ladies, moving about, cooled the

air by the motion of their fans. Determined to have the best band that could be had in the neighbourhood, Tony had brought the musicians from Carlisle.

Peeping over the oaken balustrade of the staircase, several of the domestics of the establishment surveyed the gay scene beneath, and passed whispered comments on the guests.

‘Did you ever see Miss Winnie look more charming?’ asked Mrs. Edmondston’s maid, appealing to her fellow-servants, and directing their attention to her young mistress, who, arrayed in an elegant ball-dress of blue and silver stuff, clasped close to her waist by knots of pearls, and her hair hanging in graceful ringlets about her snowy neck, fully warranted her maid’s encomiums. ‘There’s never a miss in the county that has half her good looks.’

‘No,’ replied a pretty little housemaid; ‘though, to be sure, Miss Wilson is vastly handsome, and hath a many sweethearts as I’ve heard.’

‘Marry come up, thou’rt a simple wench,

Nan. She hasn't half so many as our Miss Winnie ; for all that she will have a power of money. I know what's what. I can tell thee there's young Squire Musgrave and Sir John Ramsden's son, both fine gentlemen, they're dying for her, as is well known ; and then there's Captain Wilbraham, as was once a Parliament man for these parts, would give his ears to be in her favour. I'm sure she has no need to take up with a young Scotch lawyer. Deuce take me, if it is not mighty whimsical.'

' Heyday ! I don't know that,' replied Nan, looking admiringly at Charlie Macdonald, who just then, with his small hat set easily on his head so as to cover his eyebrows, as was then the mode, and with figure erect, was walking the circling mazes of a minuet with Winnie. "'Tis like enow, if I was our young mistress, I should be of her mind, for I'll warrant you'll ne'er find a handsomer or properer young gentleman than Mr. Macdonald, and there ne'er could be.'

Indeed, the standers-by were full of admiration of the young couple, and loud in their expressions of surprise at how well they kept time to every strain of the music, each note of which seemed an echo to their feet, while a nameless grace dwelt in their every movement.

‘Good looks ben’t everything,’ replied the waiting-maid to Nan, with an air of superior disdain, ‘as you’ll learn, wench, when you’re a bit older. But lack-a-day,’ she added, with a sigh, ‘if Mr. Tony would fall in love with Miss Wilson, he would have good looks and fortune as well.’

‘Aye, and so he would,’ interposed the old butler, now joining in the conversation and assuming a mysterious air. ‘But body o’ me, I know what’s what. I can tell you our young squire won’t take a wife from hereabouts. Zooks, I’se be mighty mistaken if he does.’

‘Heyday! Ods heartikins! Where should he take a wife from, then?’ exclaimed the abigail and Nan in chorus.

‘Why, from furrin parts, to be sure,’ replied the butler, looking very wise.

‘Marry come up! What maggot has hit his old crown now?’ cried out the two damsels in a breath.

‘You’re a couple of sauceboxes,’ said the old butler. ‘But I can tell you that our young squire hath letters now and again from furrin parts, which he is mighty eager for; and if that isn’t a proof of what I tell ye,’ he added sapiently, ‘I don’t know what is.’

‘Laws! You’ve struck me all of a heap! I hope Mr. Tony won’t bring a foreigner among us,’ exclaimed the waiting-maid in a tone of disgust. ‘What a quandary we shall all be in!’

‘Look, look!’ said Nan, suddenly turning to Captain Edmondston’s valet, who was close beside her; ‘did you ever see any gentleman dance a jig so beautiful as that Scotch gentleman they call Mr. Kincraigie? And is not he handsome! Such a proper gentleman, and so kind and generous too. He’s mighty different from that fat gentle-

man that came with him from Scotland—I mean that Mr. Hog.'

'Hog! Rot the man! I should like to hit him a douse,' exclaimed the valet, in a voice of scorn. 'What a fusty old fellow it is! He's that covetous, and that mean, though they say he has a power of money! Why, I've heard the missus say to the master—not that I ever did such an ungenteel thing as to listen, but I couldn't miss but hear as I was going out of the room—well, as I was saying, I've heard the missus say, when they were hard up for money, that she was sure he would not lend her any, for as great friends as they were. And would you believe it of any rich gentleman,' continued the voluble valet, waxing indignant, 'he says it's all right to do away with our vails. Demme, I think that the quality folk of Westmoreland and Yorkshire should be ashamed to look us in the face. But it's all nowt but a fetch of theirs to keep the money in their own pockets, and cheat us out of our dues.

Od rabbit 'em, and that Mr. Hog among 'em!'

Below, in the hall, the gentleman who was the subject of the injured valet's invectives was, at that very moment, descanting on the good work recently done in some of the northern counties by abolishing vails. A little group of auditors, amongst whom were Captain and Mrs. Edmondston, Major Wharton, and Sir John Ramsden and his lady, were deriving much amusement from Mr. Hog's vehement denunciations of the obnoxious custom.

‘I say I was rejoiced when I was told that the High Sheriff and the Grand Jury, and other gentlemen of consideration, came to a decision, when they met at the last York Assizes, to follow the custom in Northumberland and Lancashire, and some other counties, and abolish vails in Yorkshire. I say,’ continued Mr. Hog energetically, ‘that it is an inhospitable custom, and that it amounts to making you pay for your entertainment; for I say, that when I dine at a gentleman’s house, if he is a gen-

tleman of position, I pay more in vails to his servants than I should have to pay for a good dinner at a tavern. I say,' and here Mr. Hog became very wrathful, to the great amusement of his auditors, 'that when I leave the host's house all his servants are drawn up in the lobby, like a file of musqueteers, from the steward down to the lowest lacquey servant, and each of them holds out his hand in as deliberate a manner as the servants in an inn. And I say, that though this is very provoking, I can hardly help laughing; for if the master of the house waits on you to the door, he pretends not to know what is going on, but turns his head aside, as if he were ashamed to see you pay for your dinner.'

'The poor devils expect to be paid for the trouble you give them,' said Captain Edmondston; 'and in the country,' he added sarcastically, 'they have a decided right to vails.'

'How do you mean, Captain?' inquired Mr. Hog, somewhat astonished.

'Do they not make your servants drunk?'

replied Captain Edmondston, very drily
'and thus execute punctually their master's
orders ! Zounds ! it would be quite inhospitable
in the master of the house not to make both his guests and their servants
drunk.'

This remark caused a general laugh amongst the little group of auditors.

'Egad,' continued Captain Edmondston, 'when my wife and I came home last night from her cousin, Squire Sisson's, his servants made my rascal as drunk as a fiddler.'

'I say that that valet of yours, Captain, is a lazy, impudent puppy as ever walked !' exclaimed Mr. Hog, with a growl. 'He's a specimen of the pack that hang about a gentleman's hall, holding our hats and canes and gloves in pledge till we redeem them with our shillings, which the rascals impudently turn over in their hands, while they stare you out of countenance if they don't think you have given them enough. Zounds ! Edmondston, I have more than once been tempted to break your grinning rascal's head.'

‘Do it,’ said the Captain, laughing, ‘and I’ll warrant he’ll get the value of a broken head out of you in an action of assault and battery. Better to let him have his vails.’

‘I say,’ continued Mr. Hog, after the laugh raised by this sally of Captain Edmondston had subsided, ‘I am mighty glad to see that a beginning is now made towards abolishing this vile custom ; but I am afraid that it will be a long time before we can succeed, for people of the first fashion are interested in keeping it up, as it saves them paying higher wages to their servants. And, zounds ! it’s not a fixed sum we have to give for these confounded vails, but a guest has to give more or less according to his own rank and the rank of his host ! The servants of an earl or a baron expect larger vails than the servants of a private gentleman.’

‘Then I warn you, Mr. Hog,’ interposed Major Wharton, ‘not to accept an invitation to Lowther Hall while you are here.’

‘Lowther Hall is a grand house for all

sorts of extravagance,' observed Mr. Hog~~==~~
shrugging his shoulders.

'The famous pie, for instance,' said Tony~~==~~
Witham, who with Kincraigie and their~~==~~
fair partners had now halted before the~~==~~
group, in which Mr. Hog formed the
central figure.

'What pie?' asked Mrs. Edmondston;
'this is the first I have heard of it.'

'Why, my dear mother,' said Tony, in a
tone of surprise, 'is it possible you have
not heard of the great pie made at Low-
ther Hall, which was sent up to London as
a present to a certain great personage, and
was so big that it had to be put into a
waggon, drawn by two horses?'

'To some Whig, I'll warrant, for they
are a' pock-puddings,' exclaimed Kincraigie,
laughing; 'but ye maun tell me what was
in it, Tony, that I may tak' the recipe to
Auld Reekie.'

'I can satisfy you, my dear sir,' replied
Tony, 'for our old butler, whose brother's
wife's sister is cook at Lowther Hall, gave
me a list of the contents, which I have got

off by heart, that I might answer all inquiries.'

'Aweel, Tony, ye hae gotten your information frae the fountain-head, though in a verra roundabout fashion, I maun say,' observed the laird; 'but let us hear the list o' contents o' this giant pie.'

Complying at once with this request, Tony commenced enumerating the several articles used in making the Lowther pie.

'Two geese, four tame ducks, two turkeys, four fowls, one wild goose, six wild ducks, three teals, two starlings, twelve partridges, fifteen woodcocks, two guineacocks, three snipes, six plovers, three waterhens, six widgeons, one curlew, forty-six yellowhammers, fifteen sparrows, two chaffinches, two larks, three thrushes, one fieldfare, six pigeons, four blackbirds, twenty rabbits, one leg of veal, half a ham, three bushels of flour, and a stone of butter. The pie weighed twenty-two stone.'

'Ye maun write a' these things down, Tony,' said the laird, laughing, 'and I'll astonish our freends at Johnnie Dowie's wi'

an account o' the mighty Westmoreland pie. But 'tis time we suld join in the dance again. 'My dear madam, will you dae me the honour o' being my partner?' he added, addressing himself in a very gallant manner to Mrs. Edmondston.

'I shall be delighted, sir,' replied the latter.

'We have done with the French dances, and it is now time to begin the country-dances,' said Tony, addressing Charlie Macdonald, who had just handed Winnie very politely to a seat. 'I'll call for "Bonny Kate of Aberdeen;" 'twill please Kincraigie.'

'Or "The Rakes of Perth,"' replied Charlie, laughing, 'that would amuse the laird vastly.'

Advancing to the middle of the hall, Tony put up his hand to ask for silence, and then called out to the musicians:

'"The Rakes of Perth!"'

The band soon struck up the lively air, to the great delight of Kincraigie, who charmed his partner, as he had done all

the other fair ladies who had honoured him with their hands, by the ease and elegance with which he danced.

And so the evening wore on in mirth and gaiety till ten o'clock, when the guests began to disperse ; and when eleven tolled from the turret over the stables, music, laughter, and the hum of voices had ceased, the wax-candles in the deserted ball-room were all extinguished, and only a few decaying brands glowed amidst a bed of white ash on the hearth.

Mrs. Edmondston had retired to her chamber, but recollecting a bunch of keys which she had left in the library, she went herself to fetch them. As she approached the room, she saw that the door was ajar, and that there was a light in it ; and to her surprise, on entering, she saw Tony seated at a table with an open letter spread out before him, which he was perusing with a face radiant with joy.

So absorbed was he, that he did not notice his mother's entrance, and she, recollecting Major Wharton's advice, that

she should not let her son think she acted the spy on his actions, drew softly back; but whilst still lingering on the threshold of the library, she heard Tony exclaim half aloud, whilst his countenance was lit up with an expression of still greater satisfaction :

‘ I am accepted ! all my doubts and fears are at an end, and a few short months will see me in possession of unspeakable happiness.’



CHAPTER VI.

THE PHANTOM PRIEST.

‘I SAY, Tony, I think we should have done better to have remained at Birkswick, instead of coming to Appleby on such an afternoon as this.’

So said Mr. Roger Hog, with some irritation of tone and manner, as he rode slowly along the high-road to Appleby, a few days after the coming of age, in company with Tony Witham and a young farm servant, mounted on a shaggy, sturdy little pony.

‘My dear sir,’ replied Tony, elevating his eyebrows in some surprise, ‘you astonish me; I thought you particularly

desired to go to Appleby to-day ; I judged so, at least, by your words.'

'My dear lad, 'twas because I saw you were so eager to go,' retorted Mr. Hog, who had a peculiar knack when he had done anything imprudent, either of shifting the blame entirely on to some one else's shoulders, or, at least, making that unfortunate share it with him.

Tony was both amused and astounded at his old friend's assertion.

'There hath been a strange mistake, indeed, my dear sir, between us,' he said. 'Why, when Lamb predicted a heavy snow-storm before we should reach Appleby, I asked you if we had not better stay at Birkswick till to-morrow.'

'Yes, yes ; but I saw 'twas only out of politeness to me, Tony ; but I say, if we get safe to our journey's end I shall be surprised, that's all.'

'Aye, we sall be lucky if we dunnot git smithered in a drift—for I'm well blind wi' snew—or rubbed and murdered by rubbers

passing the muir,' observed Bob, the young farm servant, by way of consolation, edging, as he spoke, his pony close up to Mr. Hog.

'Egad, I think even the knights of the road will stay at home this afternoon,' said Tony, laughing.

'I say, who would be abroad such a day as this when they could stay within doors?' observed Mr. Hog, looking reproachfully at Tony. 'And I remember,' he continued in a gloomy tone, 'though 'tis so many years ago, coming along this very road with you, when you was a little lad: and I say, I liked the look of that moor Bob hath just spoken of mightily ill then, though 'twas a bright summer day; I doubt but I shall like it less now.'

And here Mr. Hog shuddered visibly; a shudder not wholly caused by the piercing gusts of north-east wind, which penetrated through his warm dreadnought overcoat and garments, but by the sudden recurrence to his mind of the story Tony had told him on that summer afternoon, and of

the unpleasant impression it had then made upon him. And now time and place and circumstances seemed to coincide ; and as they neared the dreary moor, Mr. Hog glanced fearfully towards the desolate waste, almost expecting to see the phantom priest wringing his hands and flitting about amidst the thickly falling snow.

Meanwhile, the storm seemed to increase each moment in violence. The horses were blown aside, from place to place, as often as the sudden gusts came on, and at the same time they were nearly blinded with the snow. Their riders were scarcely able to keep their seats in the saddles. At last the poor beasts came to a dead standstill, frightened and bewildered by the roar of the wind and the density of the snow. It was some few minutes before the terrified animals could be coaxed to proceed, and the two gentlemen had not ridden many yards, when both were compelled to stop and dismount, in order that Bob might remove the snow which had balled in the horses' feet.

‘I say, this is dreadful! I expect no less than to perish!’ groaned Mr. Hog, half aloud.

‘Eh, but this be a lonesome spot,’ said Bob, when he had accomplished his task of clearing the snow out of the horses’ feet, and was once more jogging along beside Mr. Hog, for his fears seemed to have made him lose all reverence for rank, and impelled him to keep close, either to his master or to his friend. ‘Yo see we’s just now gotten to the moor, and I’ve heerd my faither tell how a gentleman—a merchant frae Lunnon or Edinbro, I dinna know for certain which—was stopt on just seck a wild neet as this is like to be, and pu’d frae his horse, and dragged to yon clump o’ birk trees that yo mun just see ahint yonder, and murdered, and stripped o’ his claes, and left to die wi’ cauld i’ the snaw.’

‘Come, Bob, no more of your idle tales,’ said Tony angrily, for he saw that the fellow’s gruesome narrative had no very pleasant effect on Mr. Hog. ‘This is the

first I have ever heard of the London merchant and the highwaymen.'

'It's a' true, Squire Witham, natheless,' replied Bob, sticking stoutly to his tale; 'but, an yo dunna believe it, yo'll nae deny that th' owd priest's ghaist walks i' the muir when it snaws.'

To this remark Tony made no answer, leaving Mr. Hog to infer that he was still firm in the belief of his boyish days.

After Bob's last remark, no one spoke for a few minutes, when suddenly Tony drew in the reins of his horse and asked his companions if they 'did not hear a cry?'

'I heard nothing but the howling of the wind,' replied Mr. Hog.

'What say you, Bob?' asked Tony.

'I heerd summat, for sure,' said that scared individual, with great emphasis, 'but 'twas loike naething human.'

'There again!' exclaimed Tony, as a faint shout was borne on the wind, and this time Mr. Hog also heard the mournful cry. 'Some unhappy wretch has lost his way,' added Tony.

‘The Lord be guid unto us ! but whar is your honour ganging ?’ asked Bob, as Tony sprang from his horse.

‘To the moor, to be sure. Would you leave this unfortunate, whoever he is, to perish ?’

‘Mr. Hog, sir, stop him !’ cried Bob, throwing himself from his pony, and seizing the skirts of Tony’s coat ; ‘that cry coomed frae nae mortal thrapple.’

‘I say that the lad is right, Tony,’ said Mr. Hog, walking his horse after the young squire, who had now advanced towards the edge of the moor. ‘In such a blinding snowstorm as this, how could you find anyone ? and I say we cannot be sure of the direction whence the cry came.’

‘It seemed to come from that clump of birch trees, or somewhere thereabouts,’ replied Tony, looking anxiously in the direction he had indicated.

‘I can jist see th’ body o’ Tom Colley swinging i’ his chynes,’ said Bob, with a shudder, and looking over his master’s shoulder, as he spoke, towards the gibbet

on which that malefactor had been executed.

‘Bob, I think I see something else,’ exclaimed Tony, straining his eyes in the attempt to pierce through the increasing gloom. ‘Yes, by Heaven I do! I can make out the figure of a man; he is just now passing the gibbet.’

‘Oh, your honour! I had a gliff o’ summat too, just now. But as yo hope to be saved, dunnot tempt destruction,’ cried Bob, as he made frantic efforts to hold his master back. ‘Tis th’ ghaist o’ th’ owd priest, and gin yo follow it, ’twill lead yo to your death. He aye flits on before, and him that follows can never coom up wi’ him.’

‘I say, this is a most strange sight,’ exclaimed Mr. Hog, in a quavering tone, as he gazed shudderingly at the dark figure dimly seen in the fading light.

‘Let me go, Bob,’ cried out Tony, wrenching himself from the poor fellow’s grasp. Then pausing a moment, and crossing himself devoutly, he added,

‘Yonder poor phantom, if such it be, can have no power to hurt us; but ‘tis perchance a being of flesh and blood like ourselves, and I will not leave him to die.’

So saying, Tony turned from the high-road and hurried towards the ominous spot, where the body of the gibbeted murderer swung to and fro in his clanking chains.

‘I mun gang after him; I canna bide here,’ exclaimed Bob, wringing his hands piteously, and torn by two contending feelings—love for Squire Witham and fear of the ghost. The former feeling prevailed, however, and Bob rushed after the rapidly retreating form of his master, leaving Mr. Hog in an agony of apprehension, and exclaiming aloud :

‘I say, I am in a dreadful position! and I don’t thank Tony for bringing me into it; and I say, if I survive this day, I’ll never come within sight of this accursed moor again.’

‘Theare, it has geane, your honour!’ cried Bob breathlessly, as he reached

Tony's side ; 'as I hope to be saved, it's a ghaist ! Eh ! how cauld the wind blaws frae the fells !'

'No, no, Bob, it's no ghost ; it's some poor wretch who has fallen down exhausted,' replied Tony, as he hurried forwards, and in a few moments proved the correctness of his surmise, for within some half-dozen yards of the gibbet, on the very verge of one of the dark still pools, there lay the inanimate form of a man.



CHAPTER VII.

THE SNOWSTORM.

CAPTAIN and Mrs. Edmondston, and Winnie and her sisters, had left Birkswick for Appleby. They intended remaining there only a short time, as all arrangements had been made for breaking up the house ; and Mrs. Edmondston was eager to settle herself, as soon as possible, in her old apartments in Edinburgh, which happened to be vacant about this time. On the morning of the day to which we have alluded in our last chapter, the snow lay thick on the ground at Appleby, but was as bright and fine a winter's morn as could well be seen. Like a shroud of purest white, the snow covered the landscape, hanging in half-

frozen wreaths from the blackened branches of the trees, or drooping like pendants of white coral from the dark-thatched or slated roofs of the houses in the quaint old town, whilst the red beams of the wintry sun cast an almost magical roseate radiance over the snowy waste.

Mrs. Bridget Pippet, that old nurse of the Withams', whose acquaintance we made one Sunday in Blackfriars Wynd, in Edinburgh, lived now with a married son, at a little hamlet, some three miles distant from Appleby; and thither Winnie prepared to go on the morning in question, with her two sisters, Nancy and Dolly, to bid her old nurse farewell. Born and bred in the country, and blessed with good health, lively spirits, and plenty of activity, the three young ladies thought nothing of this walk, especially as the snow was now hard, and had been trodden down along the route they intended taking; and then the brightness of the morning made the prospect of a walk doubly inviting.

Just before Winnie and her sisters

Started, Charlie Macdonald arrived, ostensibly with a message to say that Mr. Hog and Tony were coming over from Birkswick that afternoon ; but really, if the truth were known, the motive which brought that young gentleman to Appleby was that which Mrs. Edmondston ascribed to him, in speaking to her husband.

‘ ‘Tis an idle excuse ; I vow and protest he comes for nothing but to see Winnie ! I often feel urged to speak my mind plainly to him, and forbid his visits ; and yet I do not wish to be harsh, for I have a great esteem and liking for Charlie. You know he saved my Tony’s life ; only I wish he would not be so perverse and obstinate. I vow he had no business to fall in love with Winnie, seeing that he has not a fortune sufficient to marry upon.’

‘ Poor devil ! I pity him, i’ faith, I do,’ said Captain Edmondston, with an air of profound sympathy. ‘ I do not forget past times, my dear life, my charmer, when you, like a loadstone, attracted me irresistibly to your side.’

‘I vow you are a base flatterer,’ replied Mrs. Edmondston, striking him on the shoulder with her fan, not at all ill-pleased with the compliment, however; ‘and sure, an what you say be true, ’twas an ill day when I first attracted you to my side, as you say, considering what a naughty, cruel husband you have been to me.’

‘Tis you that are cruel, my life, thus to reproach your devoted slave; but you are a surprising creature, and always say sprightly things.’

‘I am not to be softened by all this flattery,’ replied Mrs. Edmondston, with a little toss of her head, though, in truth, the glance she cast on the handsome, good-humoured face of the scapegrace she had chosen for her second husband showed that she was softened. ‘I vow I love my child too well to imperil her future interests; and if I can help it, she shall not make a mistake, as I did when I married you, you naughty man!’

‘Happy mistake,’ exclaimed the Captain, clasping his hands with a rapturous air,

‘ which blinded a creature of such good understanding, the loveliest and sweetest of her sex, to the imperfections of the wretch who adored her, and whom otherwise she might have spurned ! Killing and dreadful thought !’

Charlie Macdonald’s entrance at this juncture stayed further conversation on the topic in which he was so nearly concerned.

‘ Do you know, madam,’ he asked, addressing Mrs. Edmondston, ‘ that Winnie and the girls are going to walk to nurse Pippet’s ?’

‘ Yes, child ; and what of that ?’ replied Mrs. Edmondston, rather peevishly.

‘ Why, madam, only this, that Lamb, the steward, told me, before I left Birks-wick, that, spite of the bright morning, he saw many indications of another heavy fall of snow. Pray, dear madam, do not let your daughters go,’ he added, with an air of anxiety, ‘ or at least alone, in case a storm should come on before they get back.’

‘Tut, child ! there is no chance of anything of the kind,’ replied Mrs. Edmondston, rather sharply ; ‘and Lamb is like to be a false prophet, so far as the weather is concerned, for ‘tis truly a magnificent morning. And as to the girls going alone, an I thought it unsafe, I should send our man Caleb,’ she added, in a significant tone ; ‘but I see no need for anyone to go with them, they will be back before the afternoon closes in.’

After this rebuff Charlie said no more, and presently retired ; whereupon Mrs. Edmondston observed to her husband, with a smile, that she had seen through Charlie’s clever manœuvring to find an excuse to accompany Winnie.

‘That’s like enough, my dear. I always had a mighty good opinion of your understanding ; you seldom do anything that can be mended,’ replied the gallant Captain. ‘But as for that poor devil, Charlie, I’ll swear I pity him, for I remember how I used to manœuvre to be with you before you made me the happiest of mortals.’

‘ You are a vile flatterer,’ replied Mrs. Edmondston, shaking her finger at her handsome spouse ; adding, as she looked archly at him, ‘ I vow and protest you seem to me to take the side of that young man. What wretches you men are ! But I have my reasons for acting as I do.’

‘ And I doubt not that they are mighty good ones,’ responded the complaisant husband. ‘ But, my dear, is it not rather venturesome,’ he asked carelessly, ‘ for the girls to go so far, with the chance of another fall of snow ? and ‘tis pretty deep already where it has drifted.’

‘ La, Captain, how you frighten me !’ exclaimed Mrs. Edmondston, rising from her chair, and ringing the bell sharply as she spoke ; ‘ but ‘tis all nonsense. You know very well that country girls think nothing of long walks, and there can be no drifts on the path Winnie will take. Why could you not have spoken out before, if you thought there was any risk ? Tell Miss Winnie I do not wish her to go to Goody Pippet’s,’ she added, addressing the servant

who had just entered the room in answer to her summons.

‘The young ladies started some time ago, ma’am,’ replied the man.

‘Tis mighty provoking,’ said Mrs. Edmondston. ‘I vow and protest I have a good mind to send Caleb after them; but he may just miss them, for I told Winnie not to stay long, and perhaps she may have gone the shorter way.’

‘I spoke more in jest than in earnest,’ said the Captain apologetically and trying to allay his wife’s fears. ‘We shall see the girls home in due time, I don’t doubt. I know they have often walked to Goody Pippet’s before.’

After a very exhilarating and, to them, pleasant walk, the three young ladies arrived at nurse Pippet’s, where they stayed longer than they had intended, Winnie being unable to tear herself away from the dear old nurse, fearing that this might be a last farewell. Goody Pippet was the first to urge her darlings to leave her, as the afternoon was wearing on apace;

and so, with many tears on either side, the girls quitted the little cottage, and commenced their homeward walk at a brisk pace.

They had scarcely, however, lost sight of the few sparsely scattered thatched roofs of the little hamlet, when a sudden change took place in the weather. The sun had disappeared behind a bank of murky yellow clouds, and soon these clouds spread over the entire sky. The wind, which had hitherto moaned plaintively amongst the hills, now swept in wild gusts across the open country, each successive blast acquiring more force and volume, whilst scattered flakes of snow were whirled about in the rising gale.

Though it was yet early in the afternoon, a semi-twilight seemed already to have set in, and Dolly pressed close to the side of her elder sister with looks expressive of some alarm.

‘It is getting quite dark, Winnie,’ she said; ‘we had best go home by the high-road, hadn’t we, and not cross the moor?’

‘Oh no,’ cried Nancy; ‘tis ever so much farther by the road.’

‘I don’t know, Nancy,’ said Winnie, pausing as she spoke, whilst a fierce gust of wind almost drove them back and cast a shower of snow-flakes full in their faces; ‘it will soon be dark to-day, and suppose we were to lose our way on the moor?’

‘And meet the phantom priest?’ interposed Dolly, in a shuddering voice.

‘You little goose!’ exclaimed Miss Nancy, a young lady of a much bolder cast of mind than her more youthful sister; ‘don’t you know there are no ghosts?’

‘But nurse believes in them,’ replied Dolly stoutly.

‘That’s no proof,’ said Nancy, in a slightly contemptuous tone.

‘Ghosts or no ghosts, we will not cross the moor,’ said Winnie, in a determined tone. ‘See! the snow is beginning to fall thicker and thicker, and we shall find our walk quite unpleasant enough if we go by the high-road.’

As quickly as they could, the three girls

sped on, until they had nearly reached a part where they had to pass by the outskirts of the moor, when Dolly uttered an exclamation of terror, and even the bold Nancy retreated a step or two, as a figure suddenly appeared advancing towards them from the direction of that wild and lonely waste.

‘The priest !’ gasped poor Dolly, clinging to Winnie in an extremity of terror.

‘Nay, love, ’tis Charlie Macdonald !’ exclaimed Winnie, in a tone of evident relief. ‘Oh, Charlie !’ she said, as the young Scotchman now came within speaking-distance; ‘I am so glad to see you ! I was wondering how we should get home. But how came you out here ?

‘I heard you had gone to Goody Pippet’s, and I thought I might as well take a walk one way as another, so I came to meet you. I should have been at the village before you had left Goody’s cottage, had I not missed my way once; but now the afternoon is so far on, Winnie, that ’twill be impossible for you to reach home

before dark ; and besides, the wind is getting higher every moment, and the snow more dense. I will take you back to the village, and then return to Appleby, for your mother will be very anxious.'

'Oh no, Charlie, I cannot consent to such a plan,' replied Winnie ; 'if you go back with us, it will be quite dark before you can get half-way home—and such a night as this promises to be !'

'A Highlander is not afraid of wind and storm,' replied Charlie, giving Winnie one arm, whilst Nancy and Dolly now marched bravely in front, and turning his steps from Appleby towards the village, in spite of Winnie's entreaties. Here they quickly arrived, and Charlie no sooner saw his charge safe within Goody Pippet's cottage, than he set off on his homeward journey with rapid strides, knowing full well how anxious Mrs. Edmondston would be at the non-return of her daughters.

It was not very long, however, before Charlie had to slacken his pace, for the now thickly falling snow and fading day.

light made it necessary that he should watch his path warily, lest he should stray from it. At length he reached the spot where he had met Winnie and her sisters, and here he paused for a moment, irresolute how to proceed. He had now to choose between the high-road and the road across the moor ; the latter was by far the shorter route of the two, but then, as he was but slightly acquainted with it, and had lost his way when coming to meet the girls, was it not probable that he might again miss the right turn, now that afternoon, and with it daylight, was so rapidly passing away ?

His deliberations finally ended, however, in a determination to take the shorter road, and he forthwith boldly entered on the moor.

For a short distance he sped rapidly onwards, fighting against the wind and snow ; but after a little while the tempest became so violent and made such a furious drift of the snow, which was whirling about in circling eddies with every fierce gust, that he could scarcely see a yard before him.

Hardly able to keep his feet, he began to fear that he should be lost and perish, for the landmarks and road were fast becoming obliterated. Bewildered and confused, it was as much as he could do, in the semi-twilight that surrounded him, to keep to the narrow beaten track across the moor, which emerged, at its farther extremity, into the high-road to Appleby.

At one time he quite lost the track, but after a nervous and anxious search of some minutes, he again found the way from which he had deviated, which caused him to utter a sudden cry of joy, even in his desolate and perilous situation.

Pushing on now with renewed vigour, he soon came to where two tracks branched off, one to the right and the other to the left. Standing still, just where the road divided itself, he looked anxiously, faltered, and was at length fain to confess to himself that he had lost his way. Such a spot, he felt sure, he had never passed when crossing the moor in the earlier part of the afternoon.

All the while, the wind and snow blew ^{so} strongly in his face, that he was almost blinded, and the cold was so great, that even the exertion of the struggle he had been making failed to prevent his limbs from beginning to feel benumbed.

'Well, 'tis useless standing here,' said Charlie, communing with himself aloud ; 'twill not bring me to Appleby. I'll e'en take the path to the right—the other looks more like a sheep-track.'

And now, with every step he took, his perplexities seemed to increase—one moment he sank into a deep drift of snow, and the next barely escaped stumbling into one of the many bog-holes and pools of dark, sluggish water, only dimly seen through the thickly falling snow, and which seemed to beset his path with ever-increasing danger. Still, he manfully breasted the storm ; but such was its violence, that every now and then, he was forced to pause for a moment and turn his back to it, in order to regain his breath, which it had deprived him of ; and it was

during one of these constrained halts, that a sound broke on his ears which led him to think that he was not far from the main road.

When first he had heard this noise, he had imagined it to be the creaking and straining of the sparsely scattered trees, as their naked boughs were tossed to and fro by the wind ; but during a partial lull in the fierce gale, he became aware that the sound resembled more the ring of metal, and so hoped that it might prove to be the revolving axle of some cart or waggon wheels passing along the high road, emitting this grating noise from want of having been sufficiently greased or oiled.

Impelled by this idea, Charlie shouted out lustily, but his shouts met with no other response than the howling of the wind. Then, as he staggered on, he became aware of some object midway in his path, dimly seen through the falling snow at first ; but as he drew nearer, it took the semblance of a human form, standing up on some mound or hillock, and seeming

now to incline towards him, and then to retreat, and the grating sound seemed to proceed from where it was.

A strange feeling of dread came over him ; but a few steps more in advance, however, solved the mystery. Charlie found himself standing beneath a gibbet, and confronted by a ghastly, mouldering skeleton, swinging in chains, the clanking of which, as the wind blew these wretched remains of mortality about, he had mistaken for the creaking wheels of some friendly cart. Cold, exhaustion, and the shock of this grisly sight overpowered poor Charlie Macdonald. A sudden faintness came over him, and he fell headlong to the ground, narrowly missing falling into one of the dark sluggish pools, and there he lay till, partial consciousness returning, he felt, as in a dream, the strong arms of his friend Tony about him, saw his eyes fixed on him with loving eagerness and suspense, and heard the sound of his cheery voice ringing pleasantly in his ears.



CHAPTER VIII.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE PEACE AND THE BREACH OF THE PEACE.

THE Edmondstons had been for some months settled in their old apartments in James's Court ; and to Winnie, the two years spent in London seemed almost like a dream, so naturally had she fallen again into the old happy life in Edinburgh. Here, too, she often met Charlie, who seemed to have become more endeared than ever to the family, since the day on which his life had been in such deadly peril—a peril incurred solely from his wish to save Mrs. Edmondston anxiety on her children's account.

A few days had seen Charles Macdonald

restored to his usual health, after his opportune rescue by Tony; and it now seemed tacitly understood in the household, that at some distant time, when they should be older, these two young people, Winnie and Charlie, should become man and wife.

Winnie was supremely happy, but not so her lover, whom she often scolded for his false pride and morbid sensibility, when he lamented not only his present want of fortune, but his humble parentage. However, Charlie was not so very much to blame, and probably Miss Winnie might have been to the full as proud and sensitive, had she been in his place.

Without meaning to hurt his feelings, and with the full intention of accepting him as her son-in-law, Mrs. Edmondston did very often contrive to cause Charlie much pain and mortification by unguarded remarks and thoughtless regrets. Dismal hints as to how often love made shipwreck when young people started in life without sufficient means, and so carved out for themselves a wretched future, or references

to the unblemished descent of the long ancient lines of the Withams and Sissons, and how this noble person and that squire of high degree had been amongst Winnie's ardent admirers.

Two motives prompted this unintentional and, indeed, unconscious unkindness on Mrs. Edmondston's part—a certain degree of innate vanity, which made her wish that young Macdonald, an innkeeper's grandson, should estimate at its full value what she considered her own magnanimity in suffering her daughter, a Witham of Birkswick, to marry a man of humble birth ; and secondly, an irritability of temper, coupled with despondency, which had fallen upon her within the last year, and which made her often do and say things quite foreign to her really kind heart.

The cause of this change in her temper and disposition lay in the continued and ever-increasing dissipation and extravagance of her second husband, who, though he had won the affection of his wife's children, by his easy good-nature and

pleasant manner, was likely to prove, so far at least as the girls were concerned, an enemy rather than a friend, seeing that the large savings their mother had accumulated in former years, and which would ultimately have descended to them, had all been spent at various times to pay his debts of honour, or relieve him from his pecuniary difficulties.

For two entire months did Captain Edmondston remain in Edinburgh, apparently so contented and happy, that his loving spouse flattered herself that by her judicious management she had succeeded in detaching him from his gaming propensities. He was ever good-humoured, kind, and even merry ; but a close observer might sometimes have detected in him a sort of fidgety restlessness, as if he were not quite in his element where he was. And, in truth, he was not at all in his element, for he had looked in vain, in Auld Reekie, for the excitement he had yearned for, and which he had found in the Southern Metropolis ; and not able to endure the want

of it any longer, he at last told his wife that he had some very important business to settle with a gentleman at Carlisle, and must go there for three or four days. Mrs. Edmondston was distressed at his leaving her; but, reflecting that he was to be absent for so short a time, and was only going as far as the borders of Scotland, she raised no great objections to his departure.

Captain Edmondston returned punctually to Edinburgh as he had promised, and had been at home for nearly a week when we open this chapter. In that short space of time, however, Mrs. Edmondston could not fail to perceive, from his occasional fits of abstraction, that the business which had taken him to Carlisle, whatever it was, had not been of a very pleasant kind; but she decided to wait a few days longer, before she should ask him to confide his troubles to her.

The 5th of May was a day of great rejoicing all over the British Empire, for that day had been appointed to be a day of public thanksgiving for the happy

conclusion of peace after a sanguinary and expensive war of seven long years.

All Europe now enjoyed repose, for the Kings of England and France having withdrawn from the war, the King of Prussia and her Apostolic Majesty the Empress Queen of Hungary and Bohemia very soon composed their differences and concluded a definitive treaty of peace at Hubertsberg. It is true, that for a little while the Great Frederick of Prussia laboured under a fit of ill-humour with his friend and ally King George, for coming to pacific terms with France, and withdrawing from him the subsidies which enabled him and other German princes to carry on their own war, but George III., unlike his two predecessors, had begun to consider that the blood and treasure of England should no longer be lavishly spent in German quarrels.

When we said that the 5th of May was a day of rejoicing and thanksgiving all over the British Empire, we should have qualified our assertion.

The south and south-west counties of

England did not rejoice and feel thankful. The advantages of peace not being felt all at once, and the imposition of taxes being as necessary at the conclusion as during the continuance of a long and expensive war, new fiscal burdens were most unpalatable to the people; but with none of the new taxes were they so disposed to quarrel as with the heavy cider and perry duties. In Cornwall, Devonshire, Worcestershire, and the adjoining counties, an excise upon cider affected people of all ranks. Many gentlemen were determined to destroy their orchards and turn the land into pasture, and poor families, living comfortably and making a good meal on bread and cheese, with the help of cider, were forced to content themselves with water. Thus it happened that instead of rejoicings in these parts of England on this 5th day of May, there were riots.

In Exeter few of the church bells were rung, and in many market towns they were rung as for a funeral; while apples, dressed up in crape, with the inscription, 'Excise,

the first-fruits of peace,' were hung over the church doors. Cider hogsheads, with black palls over them, were carried by men in mourning cloaks through the streets; while men riding on asses, with strings of apples in crape round their necks, exhibited such inscriptions as 'From Excise and the Devil, good Lord deliver us.'

Lord Bute, the First Lord of the Treasury, and Sir James Dashwood, Chancellor of the Exchequer, were burnt in effigy.

On that same 5th of May a light pleasant wind was blowing in Edinburgh, and the sun shone brightly, and more than half the inhabitants of the old city, after having attended prayers at St. Giles's and the other churches, were abroad enjoying various diversions.

A great match was to be played for a silver golf-club, on the Bruntisfield Links, between the Bruntisfield Links Golfing Society and the Edinburgh Company of Golfers; and as Charlie Macdonald and Tony Witham were members of the latter company, and were among the players,

Winnie and her sisters, escorted by the Laird of Kincraigie, had gone to witness the playing. The party found a gay and numerous assemblage of visitors present, the game of golf having been long a favourite with the citizens of Edinburgh.

As early, indeed, as the sixteenth century, this pastime, in a manner peculiar to Scotland, had been practised by all ranks of people, and even occasionally countenanced by royalty itself. Charles I. was very fond of this elegant game, and played it on Leith Links. The Duke of York, afterwards James II., was much attached to it ; and when in Edinburgh in 1681, made himself popular among all ranks of men by the urbanity of his manners, being often seen in a party of golf with some of the nobility and gentry on the Links of Leith. It was on one of these occasions, that two English noblemen, who boasted their skill in golfing, debated the question with the Duke, whether the pastime were more peculiar to Scotland than to England. The dispute was agreed to be decided by

an appeal to the game itself, and a large sum of money was staked on the result of a match between the two English noblemen on one side, and the Duke, claiming to be a Scotsman, and any Scotsman he could find on the other. After making a diligent search for an efficient partner, his Royal Highness selected a poor shoemaker, by name John Paterson, not only himself the best golf-player of the day, but whose ancestors, from time immemorial, had been equally celebrated. At first John was unwilling to enter into a match of such consequence, but on the Duke encouraging him, he promised to do his best. The result was, that the two Scots won the match, and the Duke dismissed the poor shoemaker with a reward of half of the large stake played for. With the money Paterson built a comfortable house in the Canongate, in one of the walls of which was inserted a stone, with a motto appropriate to the distinction its owner had gained as a golfer—‘Far and sure.’

But to return from this digression—

Captain Edmondston, usually foremost in every scene of diversion and gaiety, chose to remain at home quietly on this day of general rejoicing, for, having in the morning received a letter which evidently discomposed him, he was in no mood for pleasure ; and his wife, desirous to discover the secret of his unwonted gloom and reserve, remained with him.

‘ La, Edmondston, how times are changed ! A few years ago, I vow I would not, on any account, have missed joining in these festivities ! ’ exclaimed the lady with a weary sigh, as she watched, from her seat at the window, the happy faces of those passing from or entering the Court.

‘ Well, my dear wife, why don’t you join in them ? I am sure I don’t want to keep you at home,’ replied the Captain, in a tone of acrimony, far from usual with him.

‘ I vow and protest you are mighty unkind, Captain, to speak to me thus,’ replied Mrs. Edmondston, with a reproachful look. ‘ I know very well,’ she continued to say, ‘ that you do not wish to deprive

me of any pleasure; but do you think 'twould be a pleasure to me without you? or that I could be gay whilst you are tormented, as you are now, by some dire trouble which you keep entirely to yourself. Alack! I was only lamenting the days when I first knew you, Edmondston, and when we were first wed. They were very happy days then.'

'Poor Mary, I often wish you had never known me. 'Twould have been better for you, and far better for your children,' replied the Captain, in a tone of the deepest sorrow.

'Not better for me, I vow and protest,' sobbed the poor lady, who, spite of his dissipation and his many faults, was most fondly attached to her second spouse—so fondly attached, indeed, that her love made her condone even the reckless extravagance, which had impaired the future prospects of her daughters; 'as for the children, I know you love them, and they are mighty fond of you.'

'What a vile wretch I feel myself, Mary,

when I hear you speak so ! I am an incarnate devil !' exclaimed Captain Edmondston, in a tone of bitter self-reproach. 'I do love your children. Zounds ! I do ; but I have been their worst enemy ; and, by my soul, I have often been ashamed to look Tony in the face—honest, straightforward fellow that he is ! I swear I have resolved many a time to give up the card-table and the racecourse, but my resolutions have always been like the letters I traced on sand as a boy, which the waves of the next tide obliterated ; and I have gone on gaming, not only to my own ruin, but to the ruin of those I love. You know I was at Carlisle last week,' he added abruptly.

Mrs. Edmondston cast an anxious inquiring glance at her husband, and said in faltering tones :

' Yes, you had to settle some important business there. Has there been anything very serious—very—'

' Zounds ! what a vile wretch I am !' exclaimed the Captain, striking his forehead.

as the races I was at. You did not
that there were races at Carlisle ?
had forgotten them ; but I remember
that there are races at Carlisle. You
ot have lost there as you used to lose
ewmarket and Ascot !

Zounds ! but I have been unlucky in
r ways than the races. In the £50
, run for by four-year-olds, I bet heavily
inst Sir James Lowther's bay filly,
tch Meggy, and lost ; and then I bet
Brilliant, and still my devilish ill-luck
sued me, for he ran against a post, lost
race, and bruised his rider, so that he
l next morning. Egad, Mary, I wish I
e in his place ! My losses on the course
bad indeed, but that is not all. I saw
re a fellow I never expected to see at
lisle—a rascally money-lender, to whom
ave a bill for a large sum just before we
London. No doubt the rascal was at
Carlisle races to accommodate gentlemen
h his cursed money, just as he does at
ewmarket. I was astonished to see him
far north ; but the worst is, that he saw

me too, and he must have tracked me here, though I left the course immediately, for I saw him in the Grass Market the day before yesterday. I am a ruined man, and the best thing I can do will be to put a bullet through my brains.'

Mrs. Edmondston listened in nervous silence to her husband's statement, but on hearing his concluding passionate words she exclaimed, sobbing and wringing her hands :

'I will beg Mr. Hog to advance me some money.'

'I have tried him myself, but he is inflexible,' replied the Captain gloomily ; 'and this morning I sent a messenger to James, but I have as little hope of him as I had of his father. There's his flunkey,' he added, looking from the window into the court beneath ; then drawing back suddenly, he said, as though speaking to himself, 'so it has come to pass sooner than I expected.'

'What has come to pass?' asked Mrs. Edmondston, looking anxiously at him.

‘Oh, nothing, nothing,’ replied the Captain lightly ; then hurriedly going to the door, he called his man, and said, ‘Gibson, I am not at home to anyone, but your mistress will see Mr. Hog’s footman, he will be at the door directly.’

Meanwhile Mrs. Edmondston, looking into the court, saw Mr. James Hog’s footman engaged in discourse with two shabby individuals, the one a big, sandy-haired man, and the other a dark little fellow, with a Jewish cast of features.

Mr. James Hog’s footman was a tall, good-looking young fellow, a perfect Adonis, indeed, in the eyes of all the waiting-women of his acquaintance, by whom he was caressed and flattered, until he was almost beside himself with conceit and vanity. He imitated all the grimaces of a pretty fellow, took rappee snuff with an exquisite air, and, as his fair admirers avowed, rapped out oaths as genteelly as any fine gentleman. So much for Mr. John Mackay, who was stalking across James’s Court with his nose elevated in the

air, and walking with a very consequential step, when the dark fellow, with the very strongly pronounced Hebrew cast of features, placed himself directly in his path, and with an air of great deference and humility said :

‘ May I mak’ sae bauld, sir, as to axe if ye can tell me whilk is Captain Edmondston’s hoose ?

Mr. John Mackay, hearing himself so deferentially accosted, condescendingly complied with this request, intimating also that he was calling there himself; but while speaking to the little dark fellow, the exquisite man in livery was careful to turn his head on one side with an air of intense disgust, for his delicate nostrils were sorely distressed by a subtle odour of garlic, which emanated from his interrogator’s mouth.

‘ And are ye Mr.—Mr.—ah—ahem—Mr. —— ?’ asked the wily Jew, simulating a man who had the name at the tip of his tongue, but could not, just at the moment, call it to mind.

‘Mr. John Mackay, at your service,’ replied he of the fraternity of parti-coloured gentlemen, condescendingly.

‘Didna I tell ye sae, Robie?’ said the cunning Jew, who had, at the first glance, perceived the footman’s weakness. ‘I kenn’d it weel,’ continued the Jew triumphantly, as he turned to his companion. ‘I kenn’d weel there couldna be twa sic braw, handsome chiels in the city.’

To this flattering remark Robie nodded a willing assent, and looked admiringly at Mr. John Mackay, who swallowed the flattery, gross as it was, and with a complacent smile, requested to know what the gentleman might want with him.

‘We’ve been luking for ye a’ the morning, sir,’ said the Jew; ‘and noo we hae jist had the guid fortune to meet ye by chance, sae I maun hae a little private conversation wi’ ye on a verra tender and delicate subject;’ then the wily Jew, speaking quite at random, added in a mysterious tone, ‘ye ken weel a certain young leddy o’ condition, and verra surprising beauty, wha

ye are in the habit o' meeting sae often,
though ye hae never cracket wi' her ?

As Mr. Mackay was in the habit of boasting in the tavern and elsewhere, to his liveried friends, of higher conquests than those of waiting-women, he at once replied with a smirk and a wink, that he perfectly well understood what the gentleman meant.

‘ Weel then, Mr. Mackay,’ said the astute son of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with a chuckle, as he placed his finger on his hooked nose, ‘ I hae a message to gie ye frae the leddy ; but I canna tell it in sic a public spot as this, and we'll jist gang to Sumner's Tavern in Jackson's Close, gin it be nae ow'r far for ye. But it is jist noo come into my pow,’ and here the Jew tapped his forehead, ‘ that as ye are gangin’ to Captain Edmondston’s, I'll jist step in wi’ ye, for it’s cauld standin’ i’ this nor’-east blast, and I am a wee bit acquaint wi’ Mrs. Edmondston’s cook, and when ye hae executed your ain message, or whate’er it is, we'll gang to the tavern and tak’ our twal’ hours thegither.’

This proposition being highly satisfactory to Mr. Mackay, he at once signified his assent, and the three crossed the court, it being settled that Robie should wait at the outer door, while the flunkey and his Hebrew companion ascended the common stair.

Other eyes, however, than Mrs. Edmondston's had watched the colloquy between these three worthies, and those eyes were the keen, piercing orbs of Gibson, Captain Edmondston's valet—a gentleman's gentleman, as he styled himself, born and bred in London, and familiar with various phases and the ups and downs of life, who, standing at a window overlooking the court, after he had taken his master's orders, gazed scrutinizingly at the triumvirate. Now Master Gibson was a very valuable valet, being possessed of considerable experience in certain departments of the law and of its ministers, which he had acquired not only in the service of his present master, but formerly, when in the service of other gentlemen, who, as the phrase was,

knew the world; so, just as the well-trained pointer scents the partridge, could the experienced Gibson almost scent a bailiff before he had set eyes on him. Accordingly, true to his training and his instincts, on the present occasion did he divine who Mr. John Mackay's companions were. But he had scarcely given over shaking his fist threateningly at them, when he was summoned to the door by a thundering knock, delivered by that Adonis in livery himself.

Now, we must pause for a moment, to preface what follows by the remark that Mr. Gibson, amongst his other accomplishments, acquired in the great metropolis, possessed a perfect knowledge of the noble art of self-defence, which he had often put in practice.

When Captain Edmondston's faithful gentleman's gentleman opened the door, which he did very cautiously, the elegant Mr. John Mackay, in all his finery, stood facing it, whilst behind him stood also the Jew, so close, that his hook-nose almost

rested on the shoulder-knot of his liveried companion.

‘Captain Edmondston at home?’ asked Mackay.

‘I am sorry to say he isn’t,’ replied Gibson, holding the door just sufficiently open for one person to enter; ‘but my mistress will see you.’

‘Perhaps ye will hae nae objection, Mr. Gibson, to this gentleman, wha is a freend o’ mine, sitting in the kitchen while I speak to Mrs. Edmondston.’

‘Yes, I shall have a d——d deal of objection,’ replied Gibson, as his eyes met those of the Jew, who instantly perceived that his profession and business had been shrewdly guessed at.

Seeing that any attempt at deception was useless, the bailiff, for such he was, as we have almost intimated before, made a sudden attempt to push by Mackay, and so effect an entrance into the passage.

A brief and violent struggle now took place on the threshold of the door.

The pugilistic Gibson having succeeded

in pushing the bailiff back towards the landing at the head of the flight of stairs, dealt out at him a scientific left and right, which the latter perceiving, avoided by dodging his head to one side; but, in so doing, the unfortunate Mr. John Mackay, who was now standing behind him, received the full force of two blows in quick succession, which sent him reeling. Robie, who had heard the scuffle, rushed upstairs to aid his companion, and had just reached the landing when Mackay fell, tumbling against him. In another moment, however, Gibson dashed a second left-hand blow at the Jew with such stunning force, that it sent him also reeling back upon Mackay and Robie.

‘The door was open, and I had a lawfu’ richt to enter. Ye shall smart for assaulting an officer of the law. Deil tak’ me, gin ye dinna l’ shouted the Jew to Gibson, as he now quickly seized hold of the unlucky Mackay, who was groaning audibly, and holding his handkerchief to his disfigured face.

Gibson, in haste, pulled the luckless foot-
man into the passage, and banged to the
door, whilst the two bailiffs, after a few
minutes' conversation, emerged from the
common stair of the house into the court
again, and walked crestfallen away. They
did not go far, however, merely stationing
themselves behind the abutment of a build-
ing, whence they could command a view of
Captain Edmondston's abode, and see who-
ever went in or out.

They had not been very long at their post,
when they saw Kincraigie hurry into the
court with a smiling face, and as hurriedly
enter the house they were watching so
closely, and after no very great lapse of
time, he came out again, followed by the
unlucky footman, holding his handkerchief
to his face to hide his swollen features,
whilst his smart livery bore stains of his
innocent blood, which had been so wantonly
shed. He walked close behind Kincraigie,
and the two passed so near to the bailiffs,
that the latter heard the laird say :

‘ I mun mak’ a call in the Canongate,

Mackay, before I gang to your master, sae
ye can jist follow me there.'

The lackey touched his hat respectfully,
and then the two disappeared.

The two bailiffs, with cat-like patience,
continued their watch, but with a result by
no means in accordance with their expec-
tations.



CHAPTER IX.

THE BAILIFFS OUTWITTED.

BEFORE stating how it came to pass that the result of the watch kept by the two bailiffs was not, as we said in our last chapter, in accordance with their expectations, we must return to Captain Edmondston's apartments, and see what took place there, after the assault committed by that gallant gentleman's gentleman, Mr. Gibson, on the officers of the law.

When Gibson entered the dining-room, in order to give his master a full and particular account of all that had happened, from the commencement to the termination of the fracas, he saw his mistress fall into hysterics. The poor lady having become

aware of the cause of the disturbance, namely, the attempt that was being made against the liberty of her dear husband, the woeful appearance of John Mackay, who, with blood-stained face, had followed Gibson into the room, so worked upon her nerves, that she immediately pictured to herself all the horrors of murder, which she imagined had been committed in this short but dire affray—little wonder then, that a fit of hysterics was the result.

‘He only just got a tap on the nose, ma’am,’ urged Gibson, in a reassuring tone, as soon as Mrs. Edmondston’s piteous cries had subsided sufficiently to allow of her hearing other voices than her own.

‘Tis verra pretty talk that, Gibson, when ye hae broken the bridge of my nose, and spoiled my face for life,’ exclaimed the liveried Adonis, in a tone of mingled distress and wrath.

‘Nay, it’s not so bad as all that, I hope, John,’ said Captain Edmondston, with an amused smile. ‘Come, cheer up, man! and

here's something to buy a plaster,' he added, slipping a coin into Mackay's hand, whose features relaxed somewhat of their woe as his fingers closed on the money; 'but how came you, Gibson, to assault your friend ?'

' 'Twas his own fault, sir,' replied Gibson, very unconcernedly; 'he shouldn't have got in the way, and whatever he got served him right for letting those bailiffs follow at his heels.'

' How sud I ken they were bailiffs ?' said Mackay, in an aggrieved tone.

' Why, where were your wits, man ? Was ye born yesterday, not to know a bailiff when ye see him ? Did one ever see the likes o' that ! A fellow grown to your age and not know a bailiff when he sees him ! I'd be ashamed to own to such ignorance !' exclaimed Gibson, in tones of withering contempt.

' Go to the kitchen and wash the blood off your face, Mackay,' said the Captain, who, though hardly able to refrain from laughing, saw that the footman was pain-

fully aggrieved by Gibson's contemptuous remarks ; 'by-the-bye, Mackay, did you bring any letter for me from your master ?'

Mackay replied in the affirmative, and handed a letter to Captain Edmondston ; then he retired, casting a wrathful glance on the imperturbable gentleman's gentleman, Mr. Gibson.

The door had but just closed on the footman, and the valet, who had been interrupted by Mrs. Edmondston's hysterics, was now about to give his master a full account of the late skirmish, when another loud knocking without announced fresh visitors.

Gibson opened the door with as much precaution as before ; but this time, the newcomer proved to be a friend, in the person of Kincraigie, who burst into the dining-room with the important news that Tony and Charlie had got the greatest number of holes, and were sure to win the game for their side, when he stopped abruptly, in the midst of his recital of the triumphs of the two young golf-players

on observing the distress of Mrs. Edmondston.

‘They came to take my dear husband to prison,’ sobbed the unhappy lady.

‘To prison!’ reiterated the laird, in a tone of wonder. ‘Why, Captain, I thocht ye were loyal to the Government,’ he added, his thoughts, be it observed, always running on imprisonment for treason whenevér the word ‘prison’ was mentioned.

‘Tis for debt I am in danger of being arrested, my dear sir,’ replied the Captain, laughing.

‘Aweel, ma’am, comfort yoursel,’ said Kincraigie, in a soothing tone; ‘he is in nae danger o’ being hanged, drawn, and quartered, whilk honour I ance ardently desired for mysel’, as ye ken, and still wad fain enjoy; but we mun nae expect to hae a’ our wishes gratifeed i’ this side o’ the grave,’ he added, with a sigh, as though for the loss of some coveted happiness.

‘What does James say?’ asked Mrs. Edmondston, as her husband glanced

hastily over the contents of young Mr. Hog's letter.

‘Very sorry he cannot oblige me, but all his money is locked up,’ replied Captain Edmondston, with a curl of his lip.

‘It’s verra extraordinary,’ remarked Kincaigie, with a sarcastic laugh; ‘but ‘tis the same case wi’ Colquhoun Grant; he is sure to hae a’ his siller locked up when a freend wants to borrow any!’

‘What shall we do?’ asked Mrs. Edmondston. ‘How long will these men watch the house?’

‘Until they catch me,’ replied the Captain, very quietly. ‘They will trust to my soon growing weary of confinement, and venturing out, and then they will pounce down upon me. And, i’ faith, I may as well be in the Tolbooth at once if I am never to stir out of my own house. If I could only get to the Sanctuary, I would see all my creditors at the devil before I would pay ’em a penny.’

‘Is there any way you can escape, sir?’ said Gibson; ‘if so, it would be well to try

it to-day, because after this row, they will be sure to think you'll bide quiet for a bit, and they will not be so lynx-eyed just now as in another day or so.'

'Hech, sirs, I hae it!' exclaimed the laird, slapping his knee. 'The bailiffs will be expecting to see Mr. Hog's footman leaving the house, he is just the same height and build as yoursel', Captain Edmondston; sae if you put on his livery, and walk out wi' me, wi' your handkerchief to your face, as though your nose was sair yet, they'll nae think but what you are John Mackay attending on me, and you may march off before their e'en.'

'I'll try it,' said Edmondston; 'but I hope that fellow Mackay hasn't gone.'

Struck with dismay at a suggestion which, if correct, would spoil his plan, Kincraigie darted out of the room, followed by Gibson, who greatly admired the laird's stratagem. Near the outer door stood John Mackay, and Kincraigie, conceiving that he was about to leave the house, threw himself upon him without any word or

explanation, and began to divest him of his garments. The poor footman, who had heard the laird spoken of as not perfectly sane, at once concluded that he had been seized with a sudden access of madness ; and imagining that his only safety lay in non - resistance, suffered himself to be plundered of his clothes without a murmur.

Off came his spruce blue coat, the laird in his hurry nearly dragging off the blue and white epaulette. The unhappy footman's waistcoat quickly followed his coat, and the energetic laird was now contemplating an attack on the poor fellow's fine top-boots, tied with blue binding, when the unfortunate, addressing Captain Edmondston, who was standing by, and unable to refrain from laughing at his sorry plight, exclaimed in piteous accents :

‘The Lord forgie ye, sir ! Wad ye let a puir chiel be murdered and stripped o’ a’ his claes ?’

‘No, no, you have nothing to fear, Mackay,’ replied the Captain, laughing heartily. ‘I only mean to change clothes

with you, and I will pay you handsomely, my good fellow, for the use of your livery. Let him go now, Kincraigie,' continued Captain Edmondston, turning to the laird, 'and Gibson shall take him to his room and give him a suit of mine to put on.'

We know already how successfully the laird's plan was carried out, and how easily the Captain made his escape to the Sanctuary.

Kincraigie and the supposed footman had not been very long out of sight of the bailiffs, when the real member of the liveried fraternity, clad, however, in some of Captain Edmondston's clothes, issued from the house, looking remarkably like that gallant gentleman, in the distance. He had caught sight of the two bailiffs, and assuming rather a surprised air, he turned his back to them and walked off, at a brisk pace, in a contrary direction. He had not gone a dozen yards, however, before he received what he was prepared for, a tap on the shoulder.

Facing round at once, Mackay disclosed
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to the baffled emissaries of the law the countenance of the 'handsomest chiel in a' Edinburgh,' as they had a short time before asserted. Robie was too much overwhelmed to speak, and moreover he was always a man of few words; but the Jew fairly gnashed his teeth with rage at being outwitted, and burst into a string of furious invectives against his own folly and short-sightedness, ending by exclaiming almost with tears, 'O hoch! hoch! hoch! I shall not sleep this nicht!'



CHAPTER X.

THE BROKEN LAIRD.

‘HOUT, laird, wha hae ye up the day?’ asked William Macpherson, the Writer to the Signet, whose acquaintance we have before slightly made, as Kincaigie stalked into an apartment in Dowie’s Tavern, where several gentlemen were taking their customary whet, or *twal’ hours*, all of them in a very merry mood, for the sweet-toned bells of St. Giles’s Church were just then playing the beautiful old Scottish air, ‘Up in the morning early.’

Inspired by the melody of the air, which called to his memory past associations, the laird instantly began to sing, in clear and not unmusical tones, one or two staves of

a popular Jacobite song, that was written soon after the defeat of Sir John Cope by Prince Charles at Prestonpans :

‘When Charlie look’d the letter upon,
He drew his sword the scabbard from,
Come, follow me, my merry, merry men,
And we’ll meet Johnnie Cope in the morning.’

Sympathizing with the enthusiastic laird, all the company joined in the chorus, singing vociferously :

‘Hey, Johnnie Cope, are ye waukin’ yet ?
Or are your drums a-beating yet ?
If ye were waukin’, I wad wait,
To gang to the coals in the morning.’

‘But wha hae ye up the day, laird ?’ again asked Macpherson, as soon as the singing had ceased.

‘As the twa individuals represented by these twa heids were in Auld Reekie no sae lang sin’, it’s verra probable,’ replied the laird, looking round the company, ‘that most o’ the honourable gentlemen here present may ken them to be the heids o’ Mr. Wesley and his spouse.’

‘Mr. Wesley and his spouse ! Hout,

laird,' exclaimed Ross of Pitcalnie, a laird of broken fortunes, of whom we will presently speak more fully, 'is it not great presumption in you to meddle wi' the clergy ?'

'I dinna ken why I sudna carve the pow o' the Leader o' the Methodists as weel as that o' ony ither mon,' replied Kincraigie, rather sharply. 'I didna do it out o' love, 'tis true, for I hae na greet respect or liking for him; he left the Church in whilk he was born, to gratify his own pride o' heart, I believe, by founding a sect o' his ain.'

'Kincraigie is a type of our nation,' remarked Dr. Home, with a smile. 'Wesley complains bitterly of our insensibility, when he compares the English with us Scots, whom he calls dead, unfeeling multitudes. But, after all, we are not so bad as the Irish, for when Whitefield, who is Wesley's coadjutor, preached one Sunday at Dublin, the multitude pelted him so unmercifully with stones, that he but barely escaped with his life. So Mr.

Wesley may find worse to complain of elsewhere than in Scotland.'

'Yes, it's verra guid, verra guid indeed,' observed Kincaigie, nodding his head contemptuously; 'this Methodist chiel, this field-preaching apostle, can talk anent our failings and lament wi' bitter words our spiritual indifference, but wad dae weel to meditate on his ain shortcomings o' various kinds, notably his treatment o' the puir leddy whom he took for his wife, and she had a good fortune, too.'

'There are two sides to that story,' said Dr. Home; 'his marriage has proved singularly unhappy, but that is no fault of his.'

'I have heard,' interposed Dr. Glen, 'that though the leddy has some guid qualities, these are all obscured by her jealousy, whilk is of the fiercest and maist harrowing kind.'

'When a man has espoused a wife,' observed Kincaigie, in a solemn tone, and looking searchingly at Dr. Glen, as he spoke, 'he is bound to love and cherish

her as lang as they baith live ; at least, he promises sae to do, and he endows her wi' a' his worldly gudes, and undertakes to satisfy all her reasonable wishes and wants. Even the puir benichted heathens gie us a lesson anent loving our wives, as ye gentlemen wha hae studied at college ken weel. See what auld Homer says on this subject in the ninth Iliad. Does he no tell us that every guid and sensible man loves and honours his wife ?

‘ The matter of dispute all arises from one cause,’ said Dr. Home—‘ the lady’s jealousy ; and to such an extent does she allow this feeling to work on her mind, that it borders on insanity, for nothing short of madness can explain her conduct. Why, I have heard it said that she will frequently travel a hundred miles for the purpose of watching, from a window, who was in the carriage with him when he entered a town.’

‘ As weel she might, puir leddy,’ replied the laird, in a tone of pity, ‘ for these Methodist leaders profess to be fu’ o’ the

Divine inspiration, and they travel abroad ower the face o' the yerth to give testimony of their godliness, and sae they hae an unco great influence ower the female sex. Noo, there's Miss Hog, Newliston's sister, ye ken ; she has received a glimmering of the new lichts frae the blessed John Wesley, as she tells us, who kindled her devotion in sic a manner, that she has become a professed Methodist, and she has gi'en up a' the vanities and frivolities of this warld—seeing that she is noo ower auld to enjoy them,' added the laird, with a chuckle.

This speech of the laird was received with bursts of laughter, and Dr. Hume jeeringly called out, ' You are cynical, Kincraigie.'

' Nae, nae ; it's as I tell ye,' reiterated the laird. ' These Methodist leaders hae great influence ower the female sex ; and Mrs. Wesley, puir leddy, canna but see, gin she has e'en in her heid, how the women crowd after them in every town they gang to, jist as if they were saints.'

‘ ’Tis all very pretty in you, laird, to stand up for Mrs. Wesley,’ said Dr. Home, laughing; ‘ but she cannot be defended, except on the plea of madness. Why, what do you think? She searches his pockets, opens his letters, puts his papers into the hands of his enemies, in hopes that they may be made use of to blast his character; and sometimes even lays violent hands on the blessed man, as Miss Hog calls him, and tears his hair.’

‘ There’s a deil for ye! ’ exclaimed Dr. Glen.

‘ I say she is nae deil! ’ said Kincraigie, with an obstinate inflection in his voice; ‘ I maintain that she is a puir, deluded creetur, wha thocht’—and here the laird looked fixedly at Dr. Glen as he spoke—‘ like anither puir deluded creetur I ken, that when she married, her husband wad keep the promises he had made her before their union; for a’ men make promises o’ sum kind in the days o’ their courtship, though they find it convenient to forget ‘em when they become husbands.’

‘Why do ye glower at me in that offensive manner, sir?’ asked Dr. Glen sharply.

‘Hout, sir! a cat may luk at a king,’ replied Kincaigie scornfully.

‘Your words are as offensive as your luk, sir,’ thundered the doctor; ‘but I would like to ken the reason why ye addressed yoursel’ sae particularly to me, in speaking o’ this brazen-faced wife o’ Wesley?’

‘Gin ye wad ken, sir, I was jist thinking o’ your ain second wife,’ replied the laird, with provoking coolness; ‘ye were nae verra considerate to the leddy.’

Dr. Glen fairly gasped for utterance, before he could make any reply to this indictment.

‘Dinna quarrel, gentlemen,’ said Captain Pillans, in a benign and soothing tone, induced under the influence of his fourth glass, ‘dinna quarrel; and aboon a’, dinna mak’ gentle, lovely woman a cause o’ dispute.’

‘Before Helen, woman was the source

of quarrels, the Roman poet tells us,' chimed in Dr. Home, laughing.

‘What do you dare to say about me and my second wife, sir?’ roared Dr. Glen, addressing Kincraigie, as soon as he could speak.

‘I say you cheated her,’ replied the laird, becoming more audacious in tone and look every moment.

‘A cheat! he ca’ed me a cheat! you bear witness to this, Mr. Macpherson,’ exclaimed the doctor, in tones half inarticulate with rage, as he shook the Writer to the Signet by the arm.

‘Aweel, Dr. Glen,’ said the laird, with great composure, ‘we a’ ken that ye promised the puir leddy before she wad marry ye, that she suld hae a carriage; but ye wadna gie her horses when ye was wed! Gin that wasna cheating, and unco barefaced cheating too, I dinna ken what cheating is—that’s a’ I can say.’

‘Here’s slander! here’s insults frae ane gentleman to anither!’ exclaimed Dr. Glen; ‘but I’ll hae the law o’ ye, Kincraigie!

Your words are actionable, sir. I ken weel they are, and ye shall hear mair o' this.'

With this threat, Dr. Glen bounced out of the room.

'Puir chiel!' remarked the laird, in a pitying tone; 'he lost saxpence yestere'en playing at piquet, and the loss has preyed on his speerits and made him peevish.'

This explanation was received by the company with a shout of laughter.

'I shall never forget the doctor's distress,' remarked Dr. Home, after the merriment had subsided, 'when he was engaged in a rubber at whist with a rather stupid partner, and Captain Edmondston and his lady against him, the Captain being, as you all know, a fine player. I' faith, I thought my services would have been required, for Glen's partner revoked, and he was in danger of breaking a blood-vessel in consequence. By-the-bye, Kin-craigie, can you tell me what the Edmondstons are going to do ?'

'Mrs. Edmondston, puir leddy, will gie

up her apartments in James's Court and gang to live with her husband in the Sanctuary,' replied Kincaigie.

'So the gallant Captain was like to have been laid by the heels at last,' said Ross of Pitcalnie. 'Well, well,' he added, in a tone of scorn, 'it has been the fate of many a brave and gallant gentleman to fall into the hands of the bailiffs, and end his days miserably in a gaol, because he hasn't money, or the art of making it. There are lucky and unlucky men, and I have been amongst the latter number, and so has Captain Edmondston, though he has always been a friend of the Government; whilst my former comrade, Colquhoun Grant, who was once like me, on the losing side, is now one of the lucky men.'

Here Pitcalnie paused, sighed deeply, and looked gloomily for a few moments into his empty glass.

We will now redeem our promise, and tell the reader something about the gallant Ross of Pitcalnie.

He was the representative of the

ancient and noble family of Ross, had, like Colquhoun Grant, been out in the 'Forty-five,' and lived on terms of intimate friendship with that gentleman. Pitcalnie, however, unlike his friend, had rather devoted himself to the dissipation than the acquisition of a fortune; and while Mr. Grant lived as a wealthy writer, he enjoyed little better than the character of a broken laird.

Now, on this very day, this unfortunate Jacobite was in great distress for want of a sum of forty pounds, which he had not been able to prevail on any of his friends to lend him, all of them being aware of his execrable character as a debtor.

Kincraigie, indeed, who was the soul of generosity, would have aided Ross most willingly; but his relatives, knowing how ready he ever was to strip himself of his last shilling to aid any needy acquaintance, took care that he should never have much money in hand at a time.

'Gentlemen, a sudden thought has struck me—a happy impulse!' exclaimed Ross,

raising his head and looking around with glistening eyes. ‘ You all know how sore pressed I am for this sum of forty pounds ; well, I believe I know where I can get it. I have still one friend in the world who will aid me in my emergency.’

‘ Indeed !’ exclaimed all the company as with one voice, a ring of incredulity prevailing in the tone in which that single word was uttered.

‘ Yes, gentlemen, and that friend is Colquhoun Grant.’

‘ Colquhoun Grant !’ re-echoed the gentlemen, and this time their incredulity was still more apparent.

‘ Hout, mon !’ exclaimed Kincaigie, ‘ ye nicht jist as well expect to get forty times forty punds frae that close-fisted chiel as forty.’

‘ I believe,’ said Macpherson, a professional rival, be it observed, of Colquhoun Grant, ‘ that gin his father were leevin’, and wanted to borrow o’ him, he wad charge him interest, and require him to gie a guid hypothec as security.’

‘What will you bet I don’t get it?’ asked Ross, appealing to the company.

‘I’ll bet ye sax bottles o’ claret ye dinna,’ said the laird, very emphatically.

‘Gentlemen, what are ye gaun to bet about?’ asked Dr. Hutton, who had just entered.

‘Ross is going to borrow of Colquhoun Grant,’ said Dr. Home, laughing, ‘and we are all ready to bet that he meets with a refusal.’

‘Tis unco like,’ replied Dr. Hutton; ‘I wad tak a bet myself against you, Pitcalnie, in this case.’

‘What shall it be—a dish o’ the testaceous creturs o’ the land, commonly called snails?’ asked Kinraigie in a sly tone, a question which aroused a burst of merriment at Dr. Hutton’s expense, which he took very good-humouredly.

‘Well, I am going,’ said Ross, jumping up; ‘and if you’ll have patience to bide here for half an hour or so, I promise to surprise you with the sight of the forty pounds.’

So saying, he hurried from the room.

‘What can he be going to do?’ asked Dr. Home, looking from one to another.

‘I hae a firm conviction,’ said the laird, with gravity, ‘that he’s gaun to steal it.’

Much merriment was caused by this observation; and when the half-hour had expired, and Ross did not return, the gentlemen all agreed that he had failed in his attempt, and was unwilling to announce his disappointment.

‘We’ll bide a wee langer,’ said Kincraigie, laughing, ‘and gie him rope eneuch to hang himsel’, sin’ he will steal.’

The half-hour had lengthened into an hour, and the company were about to disperse, when Ross dashed into the room, threw himself on to a chair, and drawing out his purse, emptied its contents on to the table, thus presenting to the eyes of his astonished friends a goodly array of guineas.

‘Forty of ‘em, my friend!’ he shouted, as he clapped Kincraigie, who was seated next to him, on the shoulder; ‘and there’s some good Queen Anne guineas amongst ‘em.

Call up Dowie, and order him to bring the six bottles of claret, for my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth, and no wonder, with all the talking I have had to do.'

'And Grant gied ye this siller!' exclaimed the laird, in a tone of the deepest astonishment.

'Yes, Grant gave it me; you didn't think I had stolen it, I suppose?'

'Egad, that's jist what Kincraigie said he thought you wad do,' interposed Dr. Hutton, amidst great laughter.

'Well, well, call for the wine, and I'll tell you how I did get the forty pounds,' said Ross.

'Ye shall hae it at ance; but ye mun hae cast a glamour in his e'en,' exclaimed the laird. 'Come, tell us a' anent it, for I'm burning to ken how, wi'out necromancy, or larceny, or burglary, ye could get a' these guineas frae Colquhoun.'

Johnnie Dowie was summoned immediately; the claret was brought up, Ross tossed off a bumper, and then amidst deep silence commenced his relation:



‘Please to imagine me, gentlemen, presenting myself in our worthy friend’s chambers in Gavinloch’s land. The conversation began with ordinary common-places, and for some time I gave him no hint that I was suing *in formā pauperis*. At length I slightly intimated, but in a very careless, off-hand way, the necessity I lay under for a trifle of forty pounds, and asked him if he could help me just in a professional way.’

‘I can guess his answer,’ exclaimed Kin-craigie, with a hearty laugh; ‘and I fancy I can see our guid friend Colquhoun Grant, W.S., wi’ his hands in his breeches-pockets clutching ony stray siller that micht be there, as though to mak sure you didna *hocus pocus* it out o’ its hiding-place.’

‘Now, I’ll give you his very words,’ continued Ross, ‘uttered with every appearance of regret, and I give Grant credit for being a devilish good actor.’

““What a pity, Pitcalnie,” said he, “you didna apply yesterday! I hae sent a’ the loose siller I had to the bank this verra

morning. It is for the present quite beyond redemption."

"Oh, no matter," I said in an off-hand tone—"tis of no consequence;" and then I continued the conversation as unconcernedly as though I had preferred no such request.'

'There were twa guid actors, then, it seems,' said the laird.

'Well, yes, I think I played my part tolerably, as the sequel will show,' replied Ross; 'but I will go on with our dialogue. By-and-by, after we had discussed some more topics of an ordinary sort, it all at once occurred to me, from hearing our friend's Doric Lowland dialect, that I would attack him on his weak side, which you all know is his fancy, that he speaks English more purely than any man in Scotland, and that, from his tongue, no one could distinguish him from a Southerner.'

'Hech, Pitcalnie, but ye're an auld sodgier!' cried out the laird.

'Of course,' continued Ross, 'I wished to propitiate him; so I just remarked, casually, as it were, "It's very singular,

Grant, that you who were born and bred in Scotland should speak English so purely!" I saw at a glance that our friend had taken the bait, for he looked modest and smiled, and slightly disclaimed the compliment; adding, at the same time, that he had studied the best and most classical English authors, and had paid special attention to pronunciation whenever he was in company with an English lady or gentleman.'

'This hallucination on the part of our friend Grant is mightily amusing,' interposed Dr. Home, 'for we all know how broad his Lowland dialect is.'

'But I shall amuse you still more,' resumed Ross, 'when I relate his strictures on the English language. "You see, my dear Pitcalnie," he said, "that nae guid English has been spoken sin' the Revolution."

Ross was here interrupted by a loud burst of laughter from all the company. After silence was restored, he continued his narrative.

‘I’ll give you Grant’s very words in his own fashion. “The language,” he continued to say, “suffered muckle in the great rebellion, for Cromwell and his saints filled it wi’ the jargon o’ enthusiasm, whilk infected it baith in the speaking and the writing o’t; but when Dutch William and the Elector o’ Hanover cam’ to the throne, our guid auld English tongue was quite spoilt. ’Tis the Coort, ye ken, Pitcalnie, that gies oot the fashion; and in oors they speak German mair than English. The verra dowgs, as ane o’ oor loyal sangs says, bark in German.”’

The delivery of this speech, made by Ross in the broad Lowland dialect, caused universal merriment, and Kincraigie loudly affirmed that his friend Colquhoun was still as hostile to the German usurper as ever he was.

‘I now saw pretty plainly,’ continued Ross, ‘that I had tickled our friend into complacency, just as, when a lad, I have tickled trout in a stream before catching them; so, to clinch the matter, I next



introduced the old subject of the “Forty-five,” upon which we are, of course, both well qualified to speak. A thousand delightful recollections then rushed upon our minds, and in the rising tide of ancient feeling and communing together, as old brothers-in-arms, all distinction of borrower and lender was soon lost, and we were again with Prince Charlie.’

‘Ah,’ sighed Kinraigie, speaking in a low and sorrowful tone, ‘it wasna my guid fortune to shed the last drap o’ my bluid in his service, and the German usurpers hae denied me my richts to dee on the scaffold, and be hanged, drawn, and quartered for my lawfu’ sovereign.’

A quiet smile passed over the countenances of those present on hearing the laird give utterance to the craze, which so persistently adhered to him, while Ross went on with his narrative as follows :

‘In the meantime, I just waited for Grant to get fully mellowed by the conversation, and then I brought in a few

compliments on his own achievements in particular.'

'Hech, sirs, but you're a cunning dog!' exclaimed Kincaigie, poking Ross in the ribs. "'Tis the auld fable o' the fox and the corbie, and wi' flattery ye hae made as great a fool o' Colquhoun as sly reynard did o' the corbie, wha, ye ken, opened her mou that she micht hear her ain beautiful voice, as the sly fox ca'd it, and sae she drapped the cheese.'

'All is fair in war,' said Ross gaily; 'and besides, 'twas not all flattery. Now, for instance, my first compliment about the affair at Prestonpans was really deserved. You know he had but a small party with him, about twenty-eight Highlanders, armed only with the broadsword, and he routed a body of dragoons and took two pieces of ordnance. I simply enlarged upon the facts, something in this way: "Ah, my friend, the name of Prestonpans is, in my mind, always associated with yours. Your modesty may make you disclaim what I say, but never was there

greater bravery shown than yours. Each individual heart was fired with a generous spirit of emulation, when they saw the gallant intrepidity with which you rushed forward, and reached the cannon first amongst all your comrades. Your gallantry spurred on others ; your spirit of unflinching bravery spread itself through the whole army, animating even the most faint-hearted, and, I may say, without flattery, that the glorious victory of Prestonpans, which so greatly influenced others to join the cause of the Prince, was due in no small measure to the indomitable courage of Colquhoun Grant, now a Writer to the Signet.”

‘Oh, oh !’ shouted Pitcalnie’s auditors, whilst their peals of laughter obliged him to pause for a few moments in his relation.

‘Aweel, an’ my freend Colquhoun could swallow that, he has got a wizen as wide as a barn door !’ exclaimed Kincraigie.

‘I assure you he swallowed it quite comfortably,’ replied Ross ; ‘he just waved his hand by way of disclaimer, smiled very

complacently, and murmured softly, in a purring voice, something to the effect that I really rated his poor services too highly. “Ah, Grant,” I went on to say, “how jealous many of us were of you, both then and afterwards! you eclipsed us in every way, and we envied not only your gallantry in the field, which won for you the encomiums and favour of our Prince and our brave leader, Lord George Murray, and the admiration of us, your companions-in-arms, but we also envied you the smiles so universally bestowed on you by the fair sex.”

‘Hech, Pitcalnie, I wonder ye could talk sic havers to a gentleman wi’ guid sense!’ exclaimed the laird.

‘Havers, do you call it, Kinraigie?’ responded Ross, with assumed surprise; ‘it is the simple truth. The fact is, you are a handsome man yourself, and you are jealous of Colquhoun, who is a handsome man too. But let me go on with my story. Well, I was telling you how I reminded Grant of the high esteem the fair sex had

for him, and that at Carlisle, at Manchester, at Stockport, at Derby, and wherever we halted, the favourite theme of every fair lady's tongue, at every tea-table, was the manly beauty and fascinating appearance of Mr. Colquhoun Grant.'

Ross was here interrupted again by the laughter and applause of his audience.

'Hout, mon, ye are a clever chiel!' said Kincaigie, with an approving nod. 'I suppose the forty pund was forthcoming after that remark anent the guid luks o' our freend the writer?'

'Not directly,' replied Ross, with a sly wink; "'twas the further allusions I made to his military exploits that settled the affair. "My dear old friend," I said, "do not hinder me paying what is a just tribute to your gallantry. Believe me, your name was a watchword; to hear of a deed of valour was to hear of you. Who chased a strong band of Gardiner's or Hamilton's recreant dragoons from the field of battle at Prestonpans, up to the very gates of Edinburgh Castle? Colquhoun Grant.

What brave follower of our Prince, when Edinburgh was surprised and taken, pursued some of the City Guard to the very walls of the castle, and stuck his dirk, as a mark of triumph and defiance, into the outer gate which the enemy had but just time to close? I say again, Colquhoun Grant." How many more of these questions and answers I should have propounded I cannot say, but Grant, excited by the recollection of his former deeds of valour, interrupted me at this stage of the conversation, and said, "Bide a wee, till I gang into the ither room." I guessed what he left me for, though I did not feel quite sure on the point. He returned, however, in a few minutes, and with a benign air presented me with the exact forty pounds, saying as he did so, that he had only just recollect ed having left that sum loose in the shuttle of his private desk.'

'Egad,' said Dr. Hutton, 'you are the first man, I believe, that ever succeeded in borrowing from Colquhoun Grant.'

'I suppose ye'll hae rin awa' at once wi'

the siller,' said Macpherson, with a sarcastic smile, 'lest he sud hae repented, and remembered a bill he had to settle wi't.'

'Oh no. I felt quite safe,' replied Ross; 'flattery and the recollection of old times, and a chat on our old campaigning deeds, have the same effect upon Colquhoun Grant as generous wine. It opens his heart and his purse at the same time. Kincraigie, I drink to your good health. This claret you have given us is excellent.' Saying which Ross drank off a bumper.

Kincraigie and the other gentlemen also drank off bumpers amidst much merriment.

After the laughter and chatting for a few minutes, occasioned by the narrative of Ross, had somewhat subsided, Kincraigie, turning to that gentleman, said in a warning and half-solemn tone :

'I hope, Pitcalnie, ye'll nae sune be in want o' forty punds again, for I mickle doubt gin ye get it a second time frae our freend Colquhoun.'

Ross gave Kincraigie an expressive wink, and speaking in the Lowland dialect,

which he sometimes used in his mirthful moods, said :

‘ This forty’s made oot o’ the battle o’ Prestonpans ; but stay a wee, lads—I’ve Falkirk i’ my pouch yet, and, by my faith, I wadna gie it for auchty ! ’



CHAPTER XI.

IN THE SANCTUARY.

ON a warm and sunny May morning—and May mornings are not always warm and sunny, save in the poet's imagination—Roger Hog of Newliston was walking along the Canongate, his mind in no accord with the brightness of the day, to judge by the disturbed and gloomy expression of his countenance. Mr. Hog was, indeed, in sore trouble, though the trouble was none of his own making. No, the cause of his present concern was all attributable to Mrs. Edmondston; and there had been times lately, when he had wished most devoutly that he had never known the Mary Sisson of old days, or her

first husband Anthony Witham, for then he should never have been placed in the painful predicament in which he now found himself. A very few days after Captain Edmondston had sought refuge within that asylum for insolvent debtors, Holyrood and its precincts, he had been attacked with a sort of low fever; and the malady, fostered by the anxious and troubled state of the sufferer's mind, increased steadily, day by day. Distracted with grief, Mrs. Edmondston had sought out her old friend, Mr. Hog, at Newliston, and had conjured him to advance her the means to pay her husband's debts, setting before him the happy likelihood that were the Captain's mind relieved of its present burthen, and he himself removed from the crowded city to a purer atmosphere, his recovery might be no longer doubtful.

It was very hard for Mr. Hog to resist the poor lady's tears and entreaties, but he had to consider her children and their future. The deceased squire, Anthony Witham, had confided to him a sacred

trust, and to that trust, in his unflinching sense of duty, Roger Hog determined to be faithful.

So he was going, on this very morning, to tell Mrs. Edmondston that, come what would, he would not suffer her to diminish or infringe upon her children's inheritance, even though the latter were in accord with her in the wish, which was the case, for the Captain, with all his faults and follies, had been no unkind step-father to them, but had seemed rather like some good-natured and affectionate elder brother.

It was hard to resist such, and so many, tears and pleadings as he had been exposed to, and as he should doubtless be exposed to again ; and thus Mr. Hog felt inclined to be ill-tempered that morning, at being 'so fashed wi' ither folks' affairs.'

The unusual heat of the day increased his peevishness, for he had latterly become very corpulent, and found, on such a morning as this, walking not altogether to his taste. Another circumstance also annoyed him considerably, and would have

urged him, spite of the heat of the weather, to accelerate his pace, had he not feared that by doing so he should only further increase the cause of his annoyance, which we will briefly explain.

A few paces behind Roger Hog, esquire, walked an old woman, clad in a short petticoat and jacket, with a wicker hamper at her back, supported by a strap encircling her head, whilst a stout stick served her as a walking-staff. She was not a very handsome old woman, for her nose and chin nearly met, her face was withered and wrinkled, and her whole appearance very dirty ; still, her countenance expressed not only good-humour, but some share of wit, and Margaret Suttie, the hawker of salt, was a well-known character in Edinburgh.

She was a native of Fisherrow. Her mother had been reputed a witch, and some of her 'cantrips' were believed by many among the superstitious of a former age.

After the death of her mother, Margaret made her living, as her parent had

done before her, by vending salt in Edinburgh, daily going the rounds of the city.

On leaving home in the morning, her route was directed by the salt-pans of Joppa or Pinkie, where she purchased a supply sufficient for the day.

‘ Wha’ll buy my lucky forpit* o’ sa-at ?
Na, na ; deil ane yet !’ was Maggie’s usual cry, sometimes varied into a species of rhyme as she proceeded along the streets. By *lucky* she meant good measure ; and when questioned as to her reason for repeating the words ‘ Na, na ; deil ane yet !’ her reply was that she always experienced *maist luck* on the days she used them.

Now Maggie had an inveterate habit of talking aloud. Whatever happened to be passing in her mind found unconscious utterance from her lips, and she was frequently followed by the youngsters, who were amused by her singular ejaculations.

* A ‘ forpit’ was one end of the measure ; the other end was ‘ half a forpit.’ At that period there was a duty on salt, and Maggie retailed hers at six-pence a coup ; that is, one-fourth of a peck. (Kay’s ‘ Portraits,’ etc., vol. i. p. 166.)

Maggie was not so far behind Mr. Hog but that he could hear full well what she said, and from the shouts, or rather yells of laughter, from the bands of urchins who flocked around her, he concluded, much to his discomposure, that they heard equally well the disparaging reflections cast upon his own person by the *saut-wife*, whose attention had been attracted by Newliston's somewhat waddling gait and excessive breadth.

‘Eh, but he’s fat—see how he shugs ! Wha’ll buy my lucky forpit o’ sa-at ?—see how he shugs !’

In this way she continued to sing out her cry, Mr. Hog inwardly heaping curses, not loud but deep, on her head, as he walked or rather waddled on, not daring, as we have said, to quicken his pace, aware that by so doing the rabble of urchins behind him would quickly guess that he also heard Maggie’s refrain, which would have increased tenfold, as he said to himself, their devilish glee.

Gradually, by an almost imperceptible

acceleration of his pace, the persecuted gentleman, muttering as he went along, ‘ I say, can a man of honour, who eats suitable! to his quality, help being fat?’ lengthened the distance betwixt himself and his tormentor, till he was out of hearing, and in a few minutes more out of sight also, and ascending the stair of the house in which the Edmondstons were lodged.

The house, or land as it was called, in which Captain Edmondston had apartments on the first-floor, had formerly belonged to a man of rank, as was evident from a view of the room in which the Captain was sitting. It was spacious, and finished throughout with wooden panelling; while over an ancient fireplace of large dimensions a painting, now quite faded, filled a panel, surrounded by carved woodwork showing traces of former gilding. Here, in this room, Mr. Hog found the once gay and brilliant officer, now a wreck of his former self, his eyes sunken, his cheeks hollow, and his whole frame worn and wasted—so rapid had been the progress of his disease.

Death, indeed, was writ upon his face, and writ broadly to those at all experienced in its dread character.

He had insisted on leaving his bed, and he was now seated, propped up by pillows, in a large cushioned armchair, close to the broad oriel window which projected considerably from the face of the wall, and from which he could command a view of the spacious, sunlit esplanade in front of the palace, under the shadow of whose grey, time-honoured walls and round embattled towers scores of little urchins were disporting themselves. Seated in the deep recess of the window, the sick man could see on the right the precipitous rocks of Salisbury Crags, presenting the appearance of a huge mural crown, above which the lofty top of Arthur's Seat rises with a rugged and steep ascent; and looking towards the left, he had a view of the turf-clad summit of the Calton Hill, standing almost within the city itself, and then bare of all buildings.

Winnie and her sisters, with Tony and

Charlie, formed a mournful little group at the farther end of the room, and Mrs. Edmondston sat near her husband, watching with anxious solicitude every change in his countenance, and his slightest movement.

At first, Captain Edmondston seemed scarcely conscious of Mr. Hog's presence; but after a few moments he appeared to rally from the partial lethargy in which his friend had found him, and he began to ask some questions about his old companion-in-arms, James Hog. Then, after a while, he lay back in his chair, and relapsed again into the species of semi-insensibility in which Mr. Hog had first found him.

It was now that Mrs. Edmondston, rising softly from her seat, and motioning to Mr. Hog to follow her, silently quitted the room, accompanied by Tony and Charlie.

This was the supreme moment for which the Laird of Newliston had prepared himself, and he had now to combat not only Mrs. Edmondston's pathetic appeal, but the generous pleadings of the young squire,

anxiously solicitous on his part to defray, if possible, the Captain's debts, and make him once more a free man.

‘What would you ruin yourselves for?—for some rascally money-lenders or gamblers?’ asked Mr. Hog, shaking his head mournfully. ‘I cannot save your poor husband, my dear lady. Poor man! I say he will soon have done with all things of this world.’

‘Oh, lackaday, do not say so!’ sobbed Mrs. Edmondston; ‘sure, he is not so bad. Tony! Charlie! you do not think so? Why, ’twas only this morning he said he felt much stronger and better, and that if he could only arrange about these debts, he would go to the Highlands, and that his health would come back to him amongst the mountains. He said he would like to go to Inverness—did he not, Charlie?’

‘My dear lady, he might as soon talk of going to the other side of the world,’ said Mr. Hog, with a sorrowful gesture.

At this moment Nancy came running in with a hasty summons to the other room,

saying that her papa was talking so strangely. Captain Edmondston had, in fact, become delirious, and was now sitting upright in his chair, a feverish glitter in his eyes, and his hollow cheeks tinged with a hectic flush. His voice sounded once more loud and strong, as in fancy he gave the word of command to his men ; and the names of Fort Henry, and the Marquis de Montcalm, and Colonel Munro, showed that his mind was busy with the events of past years, and that his fevered imagination had transported him to far-away Canada and the hunting-grounds of the Red Indians.

Then again his fancy changed, and he was at the gaming-table at White's Chocolate House—one moment he was shuffling cards, and the next watching with distended eyeballs the throw of the dice, till, clenching his hands in wild despair, he cried out as he started up in his chair, ‘ Ruined ! undone ! I have lost my last stake.’

Sinking back exhausted, he lay for a few moments very still—so still that those who so anxiously watched him thought he slept ;

but presently he opened his eyes and spoke again, and this time 'twas of Scotland, and of the metropolis of the Highlands—Inverness.

He spoke of the mountain burn sparkling in the sunlight, of the young leaves just beginning to bud on the boughs of the birch, and then of the Moray Firth and Culloden Moor.

With that last word a wild and feverish excitement kindled his eye again ; and he said, looking shudderingly around him, and trying to rise, while he laid his hand on Tony's arm :

‘ Let us go ! I am badly wounded ! But we must mind where we tread. See ! the dead lie round us in heaps ; and the heather is slippery with blood ! but—but—it’s impossible ! Tony—what is poor Frazer doing here ? I thought he had been killed —nay, as I lay wounded, I saw him shot with my own eyes—when Major Wolf refused to obey the Duke and pistol him—what a villainous insult to offer to an English officer !—I saw a soldier shoot

him at the Duke's command. Colonel Frazer is dead !

And here the Captain paused, and clutching Tony's arm convulsively, gazed at Charlie Macdonald with a look full of horror and pity.

'Nay, sir, you mistake,' said Tony, in a soothing tone ; 'tis only Charlie you see.'

'Aye, 'tis poor Colonel Frazer !' exclaimed the Captain, still gazing at Charlie with a look of dread and sorrow ; 'he has come from the land of spirits to tell me that my hour is at hand. I saw him on the Moor as I see him now, his hair shining like red gold in the sunlight, and his fearless eyes looking unflinchingly on the blood-thirsty Duke of Cumberland.'



CHAPTER XII.

AN ARREST WITHIN THE SANCTUARY.

THREE days after that mentioned in our last chapter, a large crowd stood collected together in front of the house in which the Edmondstons lodged, in order to witness the departure of what everybody knew was to be a somewhat grand funeral procession.

Death, who, as the old Roman poet tells us, knocks equally at the gates of the palaces of kings as at the humble doors of the hovels of the poor, had no respect for the sanctuary of Holyrood House, but having unscrupulously invaded its precincts, arrested poor, dissipated Ralph Edmondston, and having compelled him to pay the great

debt all must pay sooner or later, made him free from all his other debts ; and so the Captain's hoped-for passage from the sanctuary, which he had, only a few days ago, entered in so light and careless a mood, was to be, not to the bracing, health-bestowing Highlands, but to the grave. He had lost speech and consciousness after the fit of delirium which had carried him back to the blood-stained field of Culloden, and before the sun had set on that bright day, Mary Edmondston was again a widow.

The day of the funeral was unlike that on which Captain Edmondston had died, in that there was not a gleam of sunshine, and the sky was dark and lowering. The weather, however, was still very warm ; in fact, it was almost oppressive.

The large room with the oriel window was filled with guests invited to the funeral, who, according to the then prevailing custom, had been summoned, since early morning, by beat of drum, to attend. Amongst

them sat Mr. Roger Hog, who looked ~~a~~ very picture of discomfort in his heavy mourning cloak, drops of perspiration standing like beads on his forehead. The long centre table was covered with pyramids of cakes, shortbread, and sweetmeats, while wines of various kinds were being constantly handed round, and so freely partaken of by many of the gentlemen, that Mr. Hog whispered to Tony :

‘ I say, if this goes on, we shall have to leave half the mourners behind.’

At this moment, however, notice was given that the hour for departure had arrived. The hearse, with its six horses, in the street below, had already received its melancholy freight, and now the crowd eagerly watched the procession as it formed, some of the mourners following in coaches, others on horseback, and others on foot.

Tony and Charlie were the chief mourners, and they rode on horseback, accompanied by Kincraigie and James Hog, both also mounted. Mr. Hog occu-

pied a coach together with Drs. Black, Home, and Hutton. Mr. Colquhoun Grant, Mr. William Macpherson, Dr. Glen, and Dr. Alexander Monro were also amongst the mourners.

The procession proceeded at a slow pace, and in the coach tenanted by the 'twa failosophers' there took place an animated discussion, introduced by remarks on the death of Captain Edmondston in his prime, but pitched, however, in a mournful key.

'Vital action depends evidently upon nutrition, and reciprocally nutrition is influenced by vital action,' sagely observed Dr. Black.

'Yes, and an organ that ceases to nourish loses, at the same time, its faculty of acting,' replied Dr. Hutton, as sagely.

'The machinery of vital action is unknown,' replied Dr. Black. 'I submit that there passes into the organ that acts an insensible molecular motion which is as little susceptible of description as the nutritive motion.'

Mr. Hog, who had been listening intently, here exclaimed emphatically :

‘ I say, we are strangely and wonderfully made.’

A solemn and sagacious remark, which, in view of the speaker’s extreme corpulency, provoked a smothered laugh, spite of the occasion, from Dr. Home.

Meanwhile the procession advanced, and had now reached the head of Leith Wynd, when an incident occurred, which caused some slight annoyance not only to Tony and Charlie, but utterly destroyed Mr. James Hog’s equanimity and shocked all his notions of propriety and gentility.

Now it chanced that, just at this time, daft Jamie Duff, our old acquaintance, was standing with his water-stoups, waiting, amidst a crowd of men, women, and children, his turn to fill them at the public well, near John Knox’s house, in the High Street.

Jamie Duff, we must observe, had been staying, for the last week, with a fisherman’s family, friends of his mother, at

Newhaven, and having only returned to Edinburgh late on the preceding evening, knew nothing of the grand funeral which was to take place on the morrow.

Amongst the crowd waiting around the well to fill their stoups, some one spied, in the distance, the funeral procession, as it was about to turn into Leith Wynd, and cried out loudly :

‘ Hech ! Jamie, man ! there’s a funeral gangin’ doon the Leith Wynd.’

His distress may be more easily imagined than described. Ever on the look-out, Jamie had hitherto succeeded in securing nearly all the enjoyment which the mortality of the city was capable of affording ; but here was a fatal mischance, a funeral of consequence had escaped his vigilance, and now, at the very last moment, suddenly appeared before him. What was to be done ? He was wholly unprepared, he had neither crape nor weepers, and there was now no time to assume them ; and moreover, and worse than all this, he was encumbered with a pair of heavy

stoups ! It was certainly a very trying case, but daft Jamie's enthusiasm in the good cause of burying the dead overcame all difficulties. He suddenly quitted the well, walked with a brisk pace, till he reached Leith Wynd, then took his usual place in advance of the company, stoups and all, and with one of these graceful appendages in each hand, moved on as chief usher of the procession.

‘Good heavens !’ exclaimed Mr. James Hog, addressing himself to Tony ; ‘can you tolerate the presence of this idiot at your father’s funeral ? I swear it is a scandal, a disgrace, that such a thing should be suffered ! Let him be removed at once !’

‘I think it would only make a disturbance,’ replied Tony, shaking his head. ‘Tis Jamie’s craze, this following of funerals ; and it really does not matter—the poor creature is quiet and reverential.’

‘Reverential ! by Jove ! and with those stoups, too !’ ejaculated James Hog, with an air of the greatest disgust. ‘I wonder,’

he continued, 'how far this wretched fool will march at our head !'

'There is no fear that he will go far ; perhaps only outside the town,' replied Tony.

'Far enough too !' exclaimed James Hog, shrugging his shoulders and averting his gaze from poor Jamie, that he might no longer be distressed by the sight of so ludicrous an object.

Meanwhile daft Jamie, as he marched solemnly along, became strangely disturbed in his mind. The funeral party, much to his surprise, did not proceed in the direction of the West Kirk, or any of the usual places of interment. It took quite a contrary direction. It had now left the town at a distance ; this was odd ! It still held on its way ; odder still ! Mile after mile was passed, and yet there was no appearance of a consummation.

The poor crazy fellow's zeal was unflagging, and on he walked manfully, though now his feet seemed as if weighted with lead, and, thin and spare of body as he

was, the bead-like drops of perspiration clustered thickly on his face.

The poor simpleton's tongue now clove to the roof of his mouth, so parched was he with thirst, and the weight of the heavy wood stoups became almost intolerable. The procession had entered the parish of Cramond, its shores washed by the Firth of Forth, and the land now sinking into green valleys and hollows, then swelling into hills, their sides thickly clothed with trees, already bursting into leaf.

If Jamie had indulged in the hope that Cramond was the final destination of the funeral party, he was doomed to disappointment; for still the weary march went on, till, half dazed with heat and fatigue, the poor daft man began to imagine himself the victim of witchcraft or devilry, and the funeral a wile of the Evil One, who was leading him on an endless journey, perhaps to his destruction. However, chancing to glance round, and espying Kincraigie amongst other well-known faces, he felt relieved of his fears as to the super-

natural, though his surprise was unabated at the unusual circumstance of so extraordinarily long a journey.

The solemn and mournful procession still proceeded on its weary course; daft Jamie manfully kept his post, and with indefatigable perseverance continued to lead on, at its head.

In short, the procession never halted till it reached the seaside at Queensferry, a distance of about nine miles.

‘They canna gang ony farrer noo,’ said Jamie, setting down his heavy stoups, with a sigh of relief. ‘For sure they’ll be for delvin’ a grave on the beach, and pitting the puir body in it. Eh, but my futs are sair!’ and the poor fellow sighed again, as he looked down at his dust-covered feet.

But, alas for human miscalculations, with the disappointments attendant upon them! The sea did not put an end to this tedious funeral journey. The last remains of Ralph Edmondston were to be conveyed by sea to Scarboro’, in order to be interred in the family vault in his own native

county, Yorkshire; and the tide not serving at Leith, at the time the funeral was to leave Edinburgh, necessitated the journey to Queensferry, where the water was deep enough for a vessel to lie alongside the quay. Tony and Charlie were to go with the body, whilst Mrs. Edmondston and the girls were to travel by land to England.

Preparations were now made for embarking the body, while poor, disappointed Jamie, worried by a journey which had entailed so great suffering on him, stood gazing on, mute with affliction, grief, and astonishment.

Meanwhile Kincaigie, who was not going to accompany Tony and Charlie to England, was taking leave of his two young friends before they embarked.

'We shall meet again before summer is over,' said Tony, shaking Kincaigie's hand; 'my mother will return to James's Court.'

'I dinna ken what may happen before we meet again, Tony,' replied the laird, shaking his head somewhat ruefully.

‘My dear sir, I trust you do not feel indisposed, said Tony,’ with an air of concern.

‘Na, na ; I’m weel eneuch in body, but sair troubled in mind. Did ye nae perceive hoo that deil Glen glowered at me when we were taking oor wine before the funeral started ?’

‘I cannot say I observed anything remarkable in his looks,’ replied Tony.

‘Charlie, you were sitting close by the auld deevil,’ exclaimed the laird, addressing himself to young Macdonald, ‘and ye maun hae seen how he and William Macpherson were cracking and whispering thegither anent me.’

‘Certainly they were talking together,’ replied Charlie ; ‘but how do you know, my dear sir, that it was about you ?’

‘I hae nae doot ava on the subject,’ said the laird emphatically. ‘I hae had a hint from Johnnie Dowie that the peevish auld sinner Glen, instigated by that deil Macpherson, wha wants to mak’ a hantle o’ siller oot o’ him, intends bringing an action

against me for libel, or scandal, or slander or siccian things.'

'When did you libel the doctor?' asked Charlie, in unfeigned amazement.

'Why, at Johnnie Dowie's Tavern, when I said he had cheated his wife oot o' the carriage he had promised her,' said the laird. 'The law is an awfu' thing; nae man kens how a suit will turn oot. But this I ken weel,' he added solemnly, 'that gin the action goes against me, ye'll baith hae anither funeral to attend. I could bear imprisonment for my lawfu' prince, and wad hail wi' delight the sentence that sud condemn me to be hung, drawn, and quartered; but imprisonment, under a ceevil process, for cracking like an auld wife or cummer* would sune wear oot my sperrits and put an end to my life.'

'My dear sir,' said Charlie, in a reassuring tone, 'Dr. Glen can never bring an action for such a cause; 'twould be too ridiculous. Go and see Mr. Colquhoun Grant, and he will soon make an end of the affair.'

'Cummer,' *i.e.* gossiping woman.

‘That is nae bad idea of yours, Charlie,’ said the laird, in a somewhat more hopeful tone. ‘I’ll see him, and I hope when next we meet ’twill be a less sorrowfu’ time for us. Jamie Duff luks in nae verra guid sperrits, puir chiel.’

This was the fact, daft Jamie did look very wobegone; and even a munificent *douceur* from Tony, for his spontaneous but unwelcome attendance on the funeral procession, failed to make him quite happy. And when the vessel, loosed from its moorings, quitted the shore, he strained his eyes after it till it was lost to sight, with a most ludicrous stare of disappointment and amazement at not having seen the coffin deposited in mother earth.



CHAPTER XIII.

WILLIAM MACPHERSON, W.S.

ACTING upon Charlie's advice, on the morning after his journey to Queensferry with the funeral procession, Kincraigie sought out his friend, Mr. Colquhoun Grant, in his chambers in Gavinloch's Land in the Lawn Market.

He found that gentleman up to his ears in business, sitting at his desk amidst a great heap of papers, and driving his quill along at a furious pace. However, he suspended his labours on Kincraigie's entrance, and prepared to listen to the relation of his woes—for he perceived from his rueful looks that he had woes—with a sympathetic countenance.

‘I haena sleepit a wink a’ the nicht,’ groaned the laird, as he fumbled in his pocket, and at length produced a paper which he handed to Mr. Grant. ‘I received that letter yesterday, when I returned from Queensferry. I ken weel that ’twas concocted between Dr. Glen and Macpherson, before they came to the Sanctuary, to follow our puir freend’s remains on the last journey. I dinna ken whilk is the greater rogue o’ the twa.’

‘Actionable words, Kincraigie—actionable words,’ said Colquhoun Grant, with an assumption of great gravity.

‘Maybe, but it’s the truth!’ exclaimed the laird bitterly.

“The greater the truth the greater the libel,” is what the southern lawyers say,’ remarked the writer, in a jocose tone; ‘and, my dear Kincraigie, I can tell ye before I luk ower this letter, that I can gie a verra shrewd guess at its contents, for I hae heerd tell hoo ye hae slandered the doctor.’

‘The auld deevil!’ growled the laird. ‘Wha would hae thocht o’ his taking the

law o' me for sic a wee jeist ? But what maun I dae, Grant ? I munna be put in prison for chattering like a fishwife or some randie * auld woman. Gin I nicht suffer for my lawfu' King, ye ken I wad maist willingly gang to prison.'

'The doctor thinks what ye said anent the trick he played his wife onything but a jeist. He is always unco sair on that subject. But we maun compound,' replied the writer, taking a huge pinch of snuff.

'Compound ! Gin ye mean to mak' me apologize to Dr. Glen, the deil tak me gin I compound!' exclaimed the laird haughtily, and snuffing the air like a true Highlander.

'Softly, softly, Kincraigie ; I mean nae siccان thing,' replied Mr. Grant, rather testily. 'We maun deal wi' Macpherson. He winna work wi'oot the siller, and I'll promise you the doctor has had to open his purse-strings already.'

'I'm unco glad to hear it,' replied the laird, with a grim smile.

* 'Randie,' *i.e.* scolding.

‘And you’ll hae to open yours, Kin-craigie.’

‘I expected as muckle,’ said the latter, with a grimace this time, instead of a smile.

‘Aweel, Kincraigie, dinna fash yoursel’ anent it, but set your mind at ease; you’ll no hae to gang into the Tolbooth for clacking like a randie auld wife,’ replied Mr. Grant, laughing. ‘The whole affair lies in a nutshell,’ continued the writer. ‘I ken Macpherson is to be bought; he is ower fond o’ his glass to be verra particular. Gin Glen has paid him twa pounds, and we are willing to pay him fowr, he’ll throw the whole matter up. I’ll jist step ower to the West Bow and arrange matters wi’ him.’

‘Aye, do,’ said the laird; ‘and at ony rate,’ he added, with a chuckle of satisfaction, ‘I shall hae the comfort o’ kenning that Glen will greet after the loss o’ his siller for months to come.’

Mr. Grant at once put his plan into execution, and hurried off to Macpherson’s

lodgings in the West Bow. He found ~~his~~ ^{his} brother writer at home, and immediately ~~sle~~ ⁱⁿ introduced the subject of his visit.

At first Macpherson stood upon his dignity as a W.S., and enlarged upon the enormity of the scandalous words spoken by Kincaigie, and how injurious it was to his client's character to be called a cheat in a public tavern, and in the presence of several of his fellow-citizens. But Colquhoun Grant merely laughed, took a pinch of snuff, and offered his snuff-box to Macpherson; made a few remarks about the laird's state of mind, and the absurdity of bringing the subject of Dr. Glen's trick on his wife before a court of justice; and then adroitly gave his brother writer a slight hint of the drift of his visit, which the latter, not being slow to take, thereupon immediately altered his tone; and as a few guineas passed into his purse from that of Colquhoun Grant, began to pass sundry compliments upon the bravery and gallantry of the puir daft gentleman.

The door had but just closed on Mr. ~~Grant~~, when Dr. Glen was ushered into ~~the~~ room.

‘Aweel, Mr. Macpherson, hoo are ye the day? Hae ye had ony answer to your letter frae Kincraigie? I hae just noo met his friend Colquhoun Grant on the stairs; but gin he came to tender any apology for the slander, I’ll nae accept it.’

‘Mr. Grant certainly came to call upon me with reference to the case,’ replied Macpherson, very coolly, ‘but he brought no apology.’

‘Verra weel, I’m glad on’t; but we’ll see what he will hae to say when he appears before the Court o’ Session.’

‘I don’t think it will come to that, my dear sir,’ replied Macpherson. ‘I have given muckle thought to this matter since I saw you yesterday, and my misgivings as to the possible termination of the case, if we should bring it to trial, have been strengthened since I hae conferred wi’ Mr. Grant on the matter. He put forward the very plea on behalf of the laird which I

should have used myself if he had been my client.'

'An' what the deil may that be?' asked the irate doctor, in tones trembling with rage.

Without making any verbal reply, Macpherson tapped his forehead significantly with his finger.

'Mad, wad ye say?' exclaimed Glen, in a tone of mingled anger and scorn; 'why, he's nae mair mad than I am mysel'!

'My dear sir!' replied the wily writer, in a tone of remonstrance; 'come, come, reflect a wee! Now, did you ever ask to be hanged, drawn, and quartered?'

'Tut, tut! that's years sin,' replied the doctor, with a furious gesture.

'Come, come, Dr. Glen! you ken weel that he still harps upon that string. I have heard him myself,' said the astute lawyer.

'And ye ken weel, sir, that he is quite sane,' persisted Dr. Glen; 'and I tell ye I'll nae gie the matter up. Am I to be ca'ed a cheat wi' impunity?'

Macpherson shook his head, saying, 'I
cannot encourage you to go on, Dr. Glen.'

'The deil tak' ye, man ! could ye nae
hae tauld me sae mickle before ye began ?'
roared the doctor.

'My dear sir, pray compose yourself ;
do not let a trifle sic as this excite you,'
replied the writer, in a very placid tone.
'A little consideration will show you clearly
that I am advising you for the best. It
would be downright robbery, on my part,
to suffer you to proceed further.'

'Aweel, ye hae robbed me already,'
replied Glen, with a sardonic laugh,
'unless ye gie me the fees back I hae paid
ye.'

'What, sir !' exclaimed Macpherson, with
an air of offended dignity ; 'would you
have me do an act contrary to the etiquette
of the honourable profession to which I
belong ? Would you have me lose the
respect of all my learned brethren ? To do
such an act as you ask would be quite in-
consistent with the dignity of the Society
of Writers to His Majesty's Signet.'

‘ You’re unco mighty particular,’ sneered Dr. Glen, ‘ and I am happy to ken that the society has sic great respect, whilk I tak’ leave to doot, for ane o’ its members, wha, as all the world kens, will sign signet letters for ony wee bit sum, and do ither bits o’ business, and tak’ in hand ony case, however trifling, and ony client, however poor or disreputable, for ony sort o’ pay-
ment, siller or pence, or a peck o’ pota-
toes.’

‘ If you talk in this fashion, sir,’ replied Macpherson, waxing wroth, ‘ I will have you yourself before the Court of Session.’

Here we are bound to observe, that though Dr. Glen’s reproaches were in the main true, and though the professional actions of William Macpherson, W.S., were anything but respectable, there was one redeeming virtue in his character, rarely to be found in lawyers of his class, which spoke more than language could do for the goodness of his heart: rather than allow any person, whom he had been em-
ployed to prosecute, to be put in gaol, he

would advance the sum of money himself for the unfortunate debtor, even though he knew there was little chance of its being repaid to him.

‘Ye say it would be inconsistent wi’ the dignity o’ the society gin ye pay me back the fees I gied ye,’ continued Dr. Glen, heedless of Macpherson’s threat; ‘but, for my part, I dinna ken how your learned brethren, as ye ca’ em, could find fault wi’ ye for paying me back the siller ye hae had frae me for doing naething ava. Dignity o’ the society, forsooth! Gin this fashion o’ acting be in accordance wi’ the dignity o’ the society, I ca’ them a society o’ thieves and robbers.’

‘If you do not put more restraint upon your words, sir,’ said Macpherson, assuming an air of importance and severity, ‘you will lay yourself open to a more serious charge of defamation and scandal than the absurd one you trumped up against Kin-craigie.’

‘Absurd! trumped up!’ roared Dr. Glen, now almost beside himself with rage; ‘why,

ye fause-tongued deevil, did ye nae tell me wi' your ain lips that I had guid grounds for an action, and that what that gowk Kincraigie had said was a wicked and malicious defamation of character? and noo, ye daur ca' the charge absurd and trumped up !'

Macpherson smiled, but said nothing.

'I opine ye maun be drunk, as usual. Hoo many glasses o' your favourite claret hae ye had the day ?' asked Dr. Glen, with a contemptuous sneer.

'If I am drunk,' responded the writer, with a smirk, who, however, happened to be more than ordinarily sober then, 'I can only say, *in vino veritas*, as we learnt at the High School—a drunken man speaks the truth—so I have given you true law and good.'

'Aweel, I hae always heard that the writers were a gang o' rubbers,' exclaimed Dr. Glen, boiling over with rage, 'and I hae just had confirmation o' the fact.'

'Have a care, sir,' replied Macpherson, angry in his turn, 'how you malign that

honourable body, the Society of Writers to the King's Signet.'

'That honourable body o' thieves, you sud say!' shouted Dr. Glen, who, in his extreme exasperation, knew no longer what he was saying. 'Gie me back my siller, man!'

'Doctor!' replied Macpherson, his features, over which he had considerable command, relapsing into a broad grin, 'first answer me one question.'

The doctor now, thinking that the lawyer was hesitating as to the course he should pursue with regard to the matter in dispute, asked, in a more pacified tone :

'And what may that be, Mr. Macpherson?'

'Did you ever give back your fees, Dr. Glen?' blandly inquired Macpherson.

'Certainly not! but then I had worked for 'em,' replied the doctor eagerly. 'I dinna tak' money frae my patients and do naething in return for it. I gie them health.'

'But how when you gie them their

death—which you do often enough. Don't you then return your fees to the sorrowing relatives ?' asked Macpherson, in a taunting tone.

' D—— your impertinence, sir !' screamed the doctor.

' When I'm tired of life, my dear doctor, I'll send for you,' continued Macpherson, in the same taunting manner.

Almost choked with rage, Dr. Glen stood for a moment silent on the threshold of the door to which he had gone ; then shaking his fist at the lawyer, who stood leaning against the back of his chair, with a provoking smile on his face, he said :

' Aweel, Mr. William Macpherson, though ye are determined to keep a fast grip o' the siller ye hae robbed me of, I'm content ye sud hae it ; for mayhap 'twill dae ye mair harm than guid, gin ye get drunk wi' t, as ye are sure to dae, and tumble doon your three-pair stairs, when you come hame again the nicht.'



CHAPTER XIV.

SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

COULD anyone have heard Dr. Glen's prediction, and have seen William Macpherson, W.S., a few hours later, they would at once have acknowledged its accuracy, in part at least.

Late in the evening, the writer was walking up the West Bow with very uncertain steps, his hat all awry on one side of his head, and his wig all awry on the other; his clothes covered with dust, for he had chanced to fall once, and his pockets empty. He had made an end of his money, as the doctor had predicted; though, in one sense, the prediction had been wrong, for the doctor's money had been already spent

before the interview which we have recorded in the last chapter, and it was Kin-craigie's which had supplied the day's potations. The inebriated writer walked along, with an attempt at a jaunty air, and an assumption of sobriety, which sat very ill upon him; whilst, to complete the oddity of his appearance, he carried under his arm a large bunch of turnips. Certainly, had Dr. Glen seen him at this moment, he might well have sneered at the remarks he had made a few hours previously, when he had talked so grandly of the dignity of his profession. It was a sad fact, that poor William Macpherson's love of drink had led him to very low habits of business, which were rather inconsistent with the dignity he so much vaunted.

As we have before observed, no mode of payment for his legal services, whether in goods or currency, was deemed by Macpherson unworthy of acceptance.

Thus he happened, on this fine May evening, to be laden with an armful of turnips, which he had received from a

green-stall keeper in the Grass Market in remuneration for legal services performed.

Pausing now, and steadying himself against a post, Macpherson surveyed, with an air of affected rebuke, a toper who had just issued from a tavern opposite, and who was, perhaps, a trifle more drunk than himself.

‘Look at him,’ he said, addressing himself to the passers-by, and trying to point at the delinquent with his finger, which went balancing up and down, as though on a pivot ; ‘he’s fu’—beastly fu’, gentlemen.’

After passing sundry reflections on the inebriate, to the great amusement of all those who heard him, Macpherson resumed his way. Not being able, however, to maintain a proper equilibrium, his occasional struggles at last unsettled his burthen ; one or two of the turnips, like Newton’s apple, found the centre of gravity, and in attempting to recover these, nearly the whole of his armful trundled down the causeway. The writer stood surveying them for a few moments with

an air of tipsy gravity ; then, fixing his eye on one particular turnip, he advanced towards it, glared at it, and then, with slow and deliberate caution, stooped down, extended his hand, and secured the prize, saying, as he did so, with a tipsy chuckle :

‘ Ah, ah, you’re a braw neep !* I’ve got you, have I ! ’

Drunk as he was, Macpherson had still enough sense left to make him determined not to lose what might otherwise contribute much to a favourite dinner ; and so he continued very coolly, and as steadily as possible, to collect the turnips, and actually succeeded, to the astonishment of everyone, in accomplishing his task. He then continued his road home up the West Bow, and had but just arrived with his load at the stair-foot of the land or tenement in which he lived, when Kincraigie and Colquhoun Grant, on their way from Dowie’s Tavern, where they had been spending the evening, chanced to pass by.

* Neep, *i.e.*, turnip.

‘There’s William Macpherson, W.S., quite fu’, and steadyng himsel’ against the wall, wi’ a muckle bunch o’ neeps in his arms!’ exclaimed Colquhoun Grant, rather indignantly.

‘This is a verra extraordinary spectacle,’ said the laird.

‘It’s no extraordinary ava to see him in this state,’ replied Grant, who, spite of his vexation, could not help laughing; ‘but that’s the way your money has gone, my dear Kincraigie. Wha kens hoo many bottles o’ guid claret ye hae supplied him wi’!’

Apparently, Macpherson was as conscious of his position as was Mr. Colquhoun Grant, for he suddenly shouted in a loud tone:

‘Sodom! come and help your drunken brother.’

There being no reply to this call for help, he again shouted, but this time in a higher key:

‘Gomorrah! come down, I tell you, and help me upstairs.’

This time, his call was answered by the appearance of two ladies, who hurried down the three flights of stairs to his assistance. These ladies were his two maiden sisters, who kept house with him, and for whom he always showed respect and affection, though, in his drunken freaks, he called one Sodom and the other Gomorrah. Both of them reached the stair-foot at the same time, the elder relieving her brother of the turnips, and the younger offering her arm to assist him to mount the stairs, up to the flat wherein they resided. But Kincraigie, ever polite and considerate towards ladies, spite of his anger at the drunken lawyer, gallantly stepped forward and begged the Misses Macpherson not to trouble themselves, but to allow him to assist their brother upstairs. The intoxicated writer waved his hand, as though to disclaim all aid, and said, addressing the sister who had proffered her arm :

‘ You canna gie me muckle assistance, sister ; I ken what you have been doing,

Sodom.' Then pushing his hat to the back of his head, and assuming a knowing look, such as none but a tipsy man can put on, he added, addressing the laird and Mr. Grant: 'She likes a wee drappie, you ken.'

'Oh, brother, fie!' exclaimed the lady, with a look of horror at this atrocious imputation, uttered before two gentlemen.

'But you see she takes it when I am out,' continued Macpherson, bestowing a wink on Colquhoun Grant and the laird, and tapping the side of his nose playfully with his forefinger; 'and then when I come home, she sings out: "Oh fie, brother! you're drunk." Now that's what I call unco guid acting.'

Sodom stayed to hear no more of her brother's drunken jests, but hastily followed her sister, Gomorrah, up to their lodging, and left Macpherson to find his way alone upstairs, which he did, only that, for greater safety, he scrambled up backwards, as he was too often in the habit of doing.



CHAPTER XV.

WANTED A COOK.

ABOUT a fortnight or more after the withdrawal of the threatened action of Glen *versus* Robertson of Kincraigie for slander—which had so discomposed the equanimity of the *defender*, lest he should have to *compear* before the Court of Session, and be condemned to incarceration; not to undergo the darling wish of his heart, hanging, drawing, and quartering for high treason, but to suffer the inglorious penalties attached to slander, as if he were an auld fishwife—that well-known Writer to the Signet, Mr. William Macpherson, who, by the versatility of his legal opinions, had so intensely disgusted Dr. Glen, was

sauntering, with steadier steps than usual, slowly down the High Street, early in the forenoon of a sunny June morning.

The lawyer looked somewhat more disconsolate than was his wont. Siller had not been plentiful with him lately, he had expended all the guineas furnished by Kincraigie, and saw no more chance, at present, of getting any more. Profitable clients had never been so scarce, and the prospect of convivial evenings at Johnnie Dowie's, or Peter's, or Douglas's in Anchor Close, or elsewhere, with unlimited glasses of his favourite drink, claret, seemed hopelessly far off, unless matters should mend.

There was a great excitement and joyful bustle on this 4th of June, for it was the King's birthday, and manifold and various were the rejoicings all over the country, and Edinburgh had no intention of being behindhand, on this joyful occasion. The great guns from the Half-Moon Battery of the Castle were roaring forth their thunder, to the intense delight of all the young urchins of the city, and the regiment

in garrison had marched forth to the Links, attended by a motley crowd, to be reviewed. At night, there were to be bonfires and fireworks on the Castle Hill, and the Castle itself was to be lit up with hundreds of coloured lamps, while the whole town was to be illuminated. His Excellency the Governor was going to give a grand banquet in that fortress of the northern metropolis in the evening.

All this rejoicing and merriment jarred somewhat upon Macpherson's feelings, and he trotted along with moody looks and contracted brow, his clothes unbrushed and his beard unshaven. Suddenly, he felt his progress arrested by a gentle tap on the shoulder, and turning quickly round, he found himself face to face with the Governor's black lackey, who rejoiced in the name of Mungo, a person of no small importance, in his own estimation, at all times, and especially on this Royal birthday, decked out, as he was, in a brand-new suit of gay livery. As may be imagined, he was well known throughout Edinburgh.

Looking somewhat curiously and not very respectfully at the writer, the black lackey said rather abruptly:

‘Him, massa, the Governor wants to see you at the Castle.’

‘Just now?’ asked Macpherson, his countenance brightening up with the anticipation of something to his advantage.

‘Soon as possible,’ replied Mungo, very curtly.

Without losing time in further parley, the Writer to the Signet hurried back to the West Bow, and communicated the joyful intelligence to his sisters. Great was now the commotion and stir to equip him for the all-important interview with the great man. Whilst the exhilarated writer lathered his face and shaved away his beard of three days’ growth, Sodom brushed his clothes free from every speck of dust, brushing herself into a white heat at the same time, and Gomorrah drew together more than one unsightly crack in his well-worn garments, inked the seams where they had become white, and sewed

up the gaps in the fingers of his gloves. The two ladies meanwhile were on the tiptoe of expectation as to why the Governor could possibly want their brother in such haste. Macpherson himself made various conjectures, but vain were his endeavours to guess what the Governor might want. Every suggestion appeared to him unlikely, save that his services might be wanted for the commencement of some important process, which his superior talents had pointed him out to his Excellency, as the proper person to undertake.

Brushed up, and bedecked in something like the style of his better days, the renovated writer made his way to the Castle. Just at the summit of the hill, he met Kin-craigie, looking as moody and disconsolate as he himself had looked an hour ago, and holding in his hand a stick surmounted by a head exquisitely carved.

The Castle guns having temporarily ceased their thunder, so that people could hear each other speak, Macpherson, now inclined to be gracious and in good humour



with all the world, so elated was he with anticipated good fortune, addressed the laird at once :

‘Good-morning, laird ; I hope I see you quite well. But wha hae ye up the day ?’ he asked, looking at the carved head on the top of the stick. ‘Hech, sirs ! I need not ask,’ continued the writer, laughing. ‘You have copied that frae the bust in the Parliament House, and an unco good likeness it is ; but you have given his Majesty a verra wee bit o’ forehead.’

Kincraigie had, in fact, carved an excellent likeness of the young King, copied from a bust he had seen, which, however, influenced by his hostility to the House of Hanover, he had caricatured, by giving to it a remarkably receding forehead.

The laird raised up his stick, so as to exhibit the head to the writer ; but taking no notice either of his compliments or his criticism upon it, replied rather stiffly to the inquiry as to his health, saying :

‘I am verra weel, I thank you, sir ; but my lugs are deafened wi’ a’ this noise and

clamour, and folk laughing and bawling themsel's hoarse, and cannons banging and thundering. It baith fashes and angers me.'

'For why, sir?' asked Macpherson, in some surprise.

'For why!' echoed the laird, in a very high key. 'Because it is a' in commemoration o' the birthday o' the usurper wha sits on the throne that by right belangs to our lawfu' sovereign King James III.'

'This is treason, sir, and uttered under the walls of the Castle!' replied Macpherson, in a warning tone. 'What would his Excellency the Governor say?'

'A bodle for what your Governor would say!' exclaimed Kincraigie, snapping his fingers contemptuously; 'he's ane o' the English pock-puddings wha, like a' his countrymen, maun observe ilka holiday wi' a muckle consumption o' victuals.'

'Really, my dear sir, you speak very uncivilly of the Governor,' said Macpherson, 'who is, as I have been informed, of great parts and discernment. He has just

now sent for me,' he added, with an air of great importance, 'to see him at the Castle at once.'

'Oh, dinna let me detain you frae the honourable gentleman,' replied the laird, in a scornful tone. 'Gang your ways and mak' merry wi' a' the ither sneaking Whig curs ower the birthday o' your German idol, the grandson o' the bloodthirsty auld usurper wha sent the gallant and unfortunate Lords Balmerino and Kilmarnock to the scaffold, wi' a whole host o' the best and bravest o' our Scottish gentry; but the deil has noo got a grip o' the Hanoverian usurper. Hout, mon! my heart bleeds when I think o' sae muckle guid and brave bluid spilt like water, and mine spared. I wad far sooner that my limbs were blackening ower the gate o' the Tolbooth, than that I sud hae lived to see the birthday o' a German usurper celebrated wi' sic honours in the capital o' my native land, that ance hailed wi' joy the advent into it o' bonnie Prince Charlie. No King George! God save King James!'

Shouting these last words at the pitch of his voice, the laird turned abruptly on his heel, and left Macpherson at liberty to enter the Castle, which the writer did somewhat hurriedly, eagerly anxious for the approaching meeting with the Governor. Great, however, was the surprise, and, we may add, disgust of Macpherson, when he was ushered, by the servant who admitted him, into the lobby. Here, to his astonishment, he was desired to wait till the Governor came.

‘This to a W.S.,’ he said to himself, in much vexation.

And, indeed, this was the reverse of courtesy to a gentleman; but he naturally supposed that the apparent incivility arose from the ignorance of the lackey, and imagined the mistake would soon be rectified by the Governor himself.

The Governor came.

‘Well, have you got a character?’ was his first salutation.

‘A character!’ exclaimed Macpherson, astonished beyond measure at such a ques-

tion being put to a lawyer. 'Why, what do you mean, sir, by a character ?'

'Have you *not* got a character ?' reiterated the Governor, in a tone of suspicious inquiry.

'To be sure I've got a character !' replied Maepherson, still more astonished.

'Where is it, then ? can't you show it ?'

Macpherson clenched his hands, and glared at the open window, with an insane desire to pitch his interlocutor from it, head-foremost ; however, he mastered his rage sufficiently to reply in tolerably calm tones, though his bluff cheek coloured with a sense of the insult offered him.

'Show it ! Why, sir, there's not a gentleman in Edinburgh but knows me !'

'That may be,' replied the Governor, very coolly ; 'but no one should presume to ask for a place without having a character in his pocket.'

'The devil take the place !' roared the lawyer, now half beside himself with rage and vexation. 'What place have I solicited ? Why, sir, your black fellow

brought me a message that I was wanted to speak with the Governor.'

'What are you?' asked that gentleman abruptly, and with an air as though he had at last conceived the possibility of some mistake.

'I'm a Writer to the Signet,' answered Macpherson, with corresponding dignity of manner.

'Writer to the Signet! the devil! This is all a mistake! *I wanted a cook!*'

'Confound you and your cook both!' vociferated the indignant W.S., turning on his heel and hurrying from the Castle to meet only with further vexation and annoyance, for on the hill he came again in contact with the Laird of Kincraigie, who had either remained on the spot, or else, by a strange coincidence, had just chanced to be passing that way again.

'Aweel, sir,' said the laird, with great suavity of manner, but with so mischievous a twinkle in his eye, that one might suspect that he knew more of the result of the meeting between the Governor and Mac-

pherson than he chose to say, 'I trust and hope that your interview wi' that honourable gentleman, his Excellency the Governor, hath been to your mutual satisfaction.'

'His Excellency the Governor, sir, is a confounded ass!' replied Macpherson, not heeding to whom he spoke, or what he said, in his rage. 'Sir, he has grossly insulted me, sir!'

'Hech, sirs! what a world we live in! wha would hae thocht it!' exclaimed the laird, raising his hands and eyes; 'wha wad hae thocht that a man o' his parts and discernment!—but dinna fash yoursel' mair anent the matter. Come wi' me to my lodging, and we'll drink confusion to the English pock-pudding and a' oor enemies in a bumper o' richt guid claret.'

Macpherson was nothing loth to accept this invitation, and whilst he and the laird vie with each other in drinking bumpers of good claret to the confusion of that ass, his Excellency the Governor, and all Southern pock-puddings—not omitting confusion to the Whigs and all political butchers and

State surgeons, the German Usurper, and all Hanoverians and aliens, we will make a backward digression and see what had been Kincraigie's movements after he had parted with the writer, on the Castle Hill, on his way to the Governor.

The laird, in no very amiable and satisfied mood, as we have seen, over all these rejoicings, had turned his steps towards the shop of Bailie Creech, a civic dignitary, and the chief bookseller in Edinburgh, which was situate at the east end of the Luckenbooths, a row of buildings which, at the time of our story, stood in the middle of the High Street, and opposite to St. Giles's Church.

Now the Bailie's shop was a place of rendezvous for all who liked to hear the news of the day or the gossip of the town, and was much frequented by the gentry, the *literati*, and the professional gentlemen of Edinburgh; and here the laird hoped to meet his friend Colquhoun Grant, who, if he did not actually join in his own fierce denunciations of the King and his Govern-

ment, would lend a not unwilling ear to his sentiments, and secretly applaud them: thus surmised the laird to himself. When he arrived at Bailie Creech's, he found quite a little party of his acquaintance grouped together at the end of the shop, amidst cases and packages of books, and half hidden in the semi-obscurity of this portion of the premises stood the worthy bookseller himself, with a bottle of wine under his arm, on the merits of which he was expatiating to his smiling visitors, the Honourable Henry Erskine, Colquhoun Grant, Dr. Home, and young Dr. Sandy Monro, now styled Monro *Secundus*, he having been appointed assistant to his father, in the Chair of Anatomy, in the University.

‘I say, this is too bad, Kincraigie!’ exclaimed Dr. Monro, as the laird entered the shop, smiling, and holding up his stick, with the carved head on the top of it.

‘Wha hae ye up the day?’ cried out several voices, breaking in upon Dr. Monro’s exclamation. ‘It’s his Majesty!’

was the general response, followed by much laughter, as the company looked at the carved head.

‘But what’s too bad, Dr. Monro?’ asked the laird, looking a little vexed. ‘Dae ye mean that I sud nae put up the heid o’ the usurper?’

‘No, no; it is not that. I wish you had not come in just at this particular moment,’ replied the young doctor, in a tone of affected concern.

‘And why sud I no?’ asked the laird, now with some surprise.

‘Why? Well, just because Mr. Creech was going to entertain us with that one bottle of Cape wine, under his arm there,’ replied Dr. Monro, laughing, and as he spoke, laying particular emphasis on the word *one*; ‘and now,’ he added, ‘we have an unexpected addition to our number to share in it.’

‘For shame, doctor! ye forget all your guid manners and breeding,’ interposed Henry Erskine, affecting an air of rebuke. ‘We are unco glad to see you, Kincraigie,

and we all ken sae weel the respect and esteem our worthy freend the Bailie has for you, that I naething doot but he will bring up some o' that fine auld Madeira he has told us of, to do you honour.'

Mr. Creech deposited the bottle of Cape on a little table, and prepared to uncork it without seeming to notice Mr. Erskine's hint, or showing any intention of fetching the Madeira. The worthy bookseller was, in truth, a rather penurious man—a quality well known to his friends, and from which the facetious Erskine, as on the present occasion, often derived great amusement.

'I don't believe there's finer Cape to be got throughout the length and breadth of Scotland,' said Mr. Creech, very emphatically; 'and Cape, gentlemen, is a fine wine—a very fine wine; it is almost equal to Madeira, and certainly far more suitable for a morning's whet.'

'The Bailie has some uncommon fine old Madeira in his cellar, the like of which you would not taste at the King's table,'

remarked Dr. Home, with a sly look at Mr. Erskine.

‘Is that really the case?’ asked Mr. Erskine, with an air of affected incredulity. ‘I ken he has some guid Madeira, for I hae heard him say sae.’

‘I assure you that you can meet with none better,’ replied the doctor, very promptly.

‘I hae my doots,’ said Mr. Erskine, shaking his head.

During this little colloquy between Dr. Home and Mr. Erskine, the worthy bookseller nervously smiled, but looked very uneasy and very uncomfortable; and while the gentlemen exchanged meaning glances with each other, he proceeded to press them, with the most vehement show of hospitality, to help themselves to the Cape.

‘Noo I’ll tell you, Bailie, hoo ye may settle the question anent your fine auld Madeira,’ said Erskine, with great gravity; ‘let us taste a bottle of it, and ‘tis verra possible we may affirm the opinion which Dr. Home says is entertained of it.’

‘This is splendid Cape, fit for a king,’ observed the wily bookseller, obstinately ignoring all Mr. Erskine’s attempts to induce him to bring out a bottle of his vaunted Madeira, and again he commenced filling the glasses, a task he had nearly completed, when a loud shout, just outside his shop door, caused him to start so violently, that he spilt some of his splendid wine.

‘Is that Lauchlan M‘Bain, that old noisy vendor of fly-jacks and toasting-forks?’ asked Dr. Home. ‘Why, Creech,’ he continued, looking at the bookseller, ‘I thought you had got rid of him; you summoned him to compear before the magistrates, didn’t you?’

‘So I did,’ replied the Bailie, in a wrathful tone; ‘but the rascal came the old soldier over me, and entered the Council Chamber as bold as who but he, and produced his discharge, which, it seems, entitles him to pursue his calling in any town or city in Great Britain, except Oxford and Cambridge. I was horribly

fashed when I found I could not stop the old scoundrel bawling out just in front of my shop ; but James Laing, our assessor in the Bailie Court, said there was nothing to be done. I am half frenzied sometimes with the noise and——'

‘R—r—r—roasting, toasting jacks !’ shouted Lauchlan, at the very highest pitch of his voice, in front of the shop, dwelling with a most provokingly lengthened and sonorous roll on the letter ‘R,’ and completely drowning the voice of the enraged bookseller.

‘Ye’ll be compelled to purchase a cessation of hostilities,’ said Colquhoun Grant, laughing, ‘as gentlemen o’ the lang robe hae had to do.’

‘Sdeath ! I never will,’ growled the Bailie ; ‘the scoundrel shall never see the colour of my money.’

‘Had you lawyers to pay black-mail and subsidize old Lauchlan ?’ asked Dr. Home, addressing Grant. ‘I didn’t know he was so formidable a personage as to set the law at defiance.’

‘Troth, he bawled out his professional chant under the walls of the Court House, till judges and practitioners were a’ like oor freend Creech, weel-nigh distracted,’ replied Mr. Grant; ‘sae we clubbed thegither and paid him a round sum o’ siller on condition that his voice sudna be heard again. Aweel, he keepit his word in one way, for though he appeared as usual the next day before the Court House, his voice certainly wasn’t heard, but he clanged awa at sic a rate wi’ a muckle bell that we were a’ deafened, and glad to compound again wi’ the auld rogue; but this time the condition o’ payment was that he sud keep a’ thegither awa frae oor end o’ the town, and I maun say he has keepit his word verra scrupulously.’

‘I’ll not make conditions with the impudent old knave,’ exclaimed Creech, very indignant, not only at the annoyance, but at the idea of being mulcted. ‘But, gentlemen, let us discuss a more pleasant topic: I suggest that we drink the health of his Majesty on this day of rejoicing.’

‘Gin ye mean your King George, as I suppose ye dae, deil tak’ me gin I drink the toast! No Hanover, I say! The kingdom will never be great again until King James, oor rightfu’ sovereign, is seated on the throne! No King George for me! confusion to a’ Germans!’

Uttering these treasonable words, the laird looked defiantly round the company.

‘Drink to the King, my dear Kincraigie,’ interposed Henry Erskine, ‘drink to the King, and settle in your own mind wha he should be. And noo, Creech,’ he added, turning to the bookseller, ‘we sud be generous in our loyalty; wherefore, wad it no be mair beseeming to drink his Majesty’s health in some o’ your rare auld Madeira?’

‘I’ll jist bring anither bottle o’ Cape; one wine does as well as another for the toast,’ replied the obdurate Bailie.

‘Weel, weel, sin’ we canna get to Madeira, we maun double the Cape,’ replied the ever ready-witted Mr. Henry Erskine, with an air of assumed resignation.

After the gentlemen had ceased laughing at the accomplished advocate's pun, and drunk the toast in a fresh bottle of Cape, and Lauchlan, who had a second time bawled out his 'R—r—r—roasting, toasting jacks,' in deafening tones, was silent for a few seconds, Mr. Creech said :

' Gentlemen, I have been plagued all this morning.'

' We are verra sorry to hear it. What has fashed you sae muckle ?' inquired Colquhoun Grant, more in a jocose tone, however, than a sympathizing one.

' The Governor of the Castle,' replied the bookseller, ' was in want of a cook, and he took it into his head to apply to me, thinking I might find him one. I tried my best, but could hear of no one likely to suit ; and I assure you that since I unfortunately undertook the commission, I've had no peace of my life. Morning, noon, and night, that black lackey of his comes marching into the shop, pestering me with messages, till I have often felt inclined to kick the fellow out. Well, this morning

he was here, as usual, when I was up to my ears in business, dinning in my lugs his confounded message, “ Massa Creech, hab you heard of a cook yet for my massa, him Gubberner ?” and just at that moment I chanced to espy Macpherson the writer passing my door, sober, for a wonder ; and all of a sudden the thought just came into my head, how I might rid myself of my black tormentor and be even with Macpherson for serving me a scurvy trick. Drat him ! continued the penurious bookseller, with a sardonic grin, ‘ he came in here to look at a book, and when I just asked him a little question on a trifling legal matter, he sent me in a bill for a consultation. Od rabbit him !’

‘ The law has a sharp edge, and ye ken the proverb anent meddling wi’ edged tools,’ interposed Henry Erskine.

‘ Well, gentlemen,’ continued Mr. Creech, grinning still more, ‘ I said to the black fellow, “ Do you see that man on the other side of the way ? go quick after him ; he is a cook in want of a place.” ’

Here Kincaigie, who was just in the act of sipping his Cape, was seized with so violent a fit of laughter that he nearly choked, and it was some time before he recovered sufficiently to tell his friends of his having met with Macpherson, sprucely trimmed and made neat, on the Castle Hill, on his way to the Governor.

Creech rubbed his hands and began laughing heartily, till again the stentorian voice of Lauchlan assailed his ears with the obnoxious cry :

‘ R—r—r—roasting, toasting jacks.’



CHAPTER XVI.

CHARLES FRASER.

IN a spacious and pleasant room in the Widow Gillespie's house sat Charlie Macdonald, one bright September afternoon—a fresh breezy afternoon, with a clear blue sky, over which a few feathery white clouds were drifted by the west wind.

The leaves of the limes growing at the base of the Castle Hill were flecked with streaks of yellow, and the cornfields stretching away from the shores of the Firth of Forth had been shorn of their golden treasures, for the month was drawing rapidly to a close; not rapidly enough, however, for Charlie Macdonald, for in the

first days of October Winnie Witham was to be his wife, and so October could not come too soon.

Never, perhaps, had there been a happier bridegroom expectant than the handsome young Highlander. He and Winnie were so united in taste, in thought, in feeling, so earnestly and unaffectedly in love with each other, so prepared to bear their mutual burthens, that their future seemed reasonably destined to be a most happy one.

Fortune, too, had smiled on young Macdonald. He was clever in his profession, and was already making his way in it, with a prospect, in a few years, of being in a lucrative practice; whilst, for the present, his grandfather, who had secured a competency from his tavern, and had had money bequeathed to him by a relative, had settled a good allowance on his beloved grandson, dearer than ever, of late, to the old man since he had become a widower, and had few near relatives on whom to bestow his love.

Then the pleasing thought occurred ever and anon to Charlie that he might call himself Tony's brother—dear old Tony, as he sometimes lovingly styled him, whom he had loved since he first knew him with all a brother's affection.

Mrs. Edmondston was again settled in her former abode in James's Court, where Charlie, the accepted lover of Winnie, was a daily visitor. After having seen the remains of her late husband laid in the vault of his ancestors in Yorkshire, Mrs. Edmondston had remained only a few weeks at Birkswick, and had afterwards returned to Edinburgh, as Tony had told Kincraigie she would do, when taking leave of him at Queensferry.

Mrs. Edmondston was very kind, nay more than kind, very loving and motherly towards Charlie Macdonald ; yet, at times, a few little words, dropped perhaps almost unconsciously, showed that she could not quite reconcile herself to the thought of a Witham, and the grand-daughter of a Sisson, being allied by marriage to a

tavern-keeper, even though the tavern-keeper might be first cousin to a laird.

All earthly bliss, however, must have its alloy, and the comparative lowness of his origin was the one drop of bitterness in the cup of Charlie's happiness. This one shadow on his otherwise sunlit path he had carefully concealed from his fond grandsire ; but the Widow Gillespie, who sometimes corresponded with cousin Sandy Macdonald, at Inverness, had not been so reticent ; for, truth to say, the worthy dame entertained no very amiable sentiments towards Mrs. Edmondston, on account of the reflections the latter had occasionally cast on Charlie's parentage, and these sentiments she could not keep to herself.

‘Weel, laddie, are ye ready ?’ asked the laird, as he entered the room where Charlie was sitting.

‘Oh, sir, I have been ready these two hours,’ was the prompt reply.

‘A lover’s twa hours !’ replied Kincraigie, laughing. ‘My faith, laddie, ’tis scarce twenty minutes sin’ I left you ; but every

minute that keeps you frae your mistress seems an age, I'll warrant. Aweel, let us gang our ways to James's Court, for may be Winnie is counting the minutes too.'

Kincraigie had been invited to spend the evening at Mrs. Edmondston's, and had detained Charlie whilst he made a few improvements in his toilet, to the secret vexation of the impatient lover, who, so soon as they had left the house, walked along with such rapid strides as to necessitate no little exertion on the laird's part to keep up with him.

Arrived at Mrs. Edmondston's apartments, there they found that good lady herself, very gentle and amiable, as was her wont, only a trifle fretful, because she was soon about to lose her daughter, and because Tony, her first-born and best loved, still had secrets which he kept from her, still shut himself up at unseasonable hours, absented himself from home without giving a reason, and kept up a foreign correspondence. Sometimes, her fears pointed to a secret marriage with some low-born girl;

but this thought was too dreadful a suspicion to be harboured for any length of time.

Tony was at James's Court, full of his usual mirth and humour, and Winnie sweetly blushing and smiling a fond welcome to her lover. Major Wharton, who was then in Edinburgh on a visit, formed an addition to the family circlé; and Nancy and Dolly Witham, now two fine grown-up young ladies, completed the little party assembled in Mrs. Edmondston's drawing-room.

Scarcely ten minutes had elapsed since the arrival of the laird and Charlie, when a servant entered and said that a gentleman wished to speak with Mr. Macdonald.

‘With me?’ said Charlie, with a look of surprise.

‘Yes, sir; and he said he had been to Mrs. Gillespie’s, and you was just gone, and he has come from Inverness.’

‘It must be my grandfather,’ exclaimed Charlie, starting up from his chair; ‘how strange he should never have told me he

was coming ! I hope that nothing has happened !

‘ Go and fetch your grandfather, Charlie,’ said Mrs. Edmondston ; ‘ and bid him welcome from me.’

Charlie hurried from the room, asking himself, in wonder, what could have brought his aged relative on so long a journey.

Meanwhile Mrs. Edmondston, true lady as she was, prepared to receive the tavern-keeper with as much courtesy as she would have shown to one of far higher social position. He was her future son-in-law’s near relative, and was to be her own guest, and thus, however simple, or unlettered, or clownish he might be, his reception should not lack in warmth and scrupulous attention.

Still, with all these praiseworthy intentions, it was a great relief to the lady’s feelings when, instead of a mine host, with a capacious paunch and rubicund cheeks and proboscis, the type, in her mind, of all tavern-keepers, Charlie ushered in a man

in every respect the reverse of the picture she had drawn.

The lapse of many years have made but few changes in the form and features of Alexander Macdonald ; he is much the same man as when we first introduced him to our readers in his tavern at Inverness. His tall figure is but slightly bowed, spite of his seventy-eight years, and his blue eye is yet keen and bright. His hair tied up behind by a black ribbon, and now changed to snowy white, and the deeper lines on his broad forehead, alone mark the progress of age. Struck by his unaffected and yet dignified bearing, Mrs. Edmondston received him with great politeness and affability, whilst Tony greeted him with all the generous warmth of his ardent and affectionate nature, and Winnie with a sweet tenderness. As for Major Wharton, he took the old man's hand in his warm grasp, and said in a tone full of earnest kindness :

‘ Mr. Macdonald, I did not know till some two years ago, that your grandson, for whom I have always felt a particular

friendship, was the little child whom I first saw at the tavern at Inverness, on the fatal day of Culloden. Since I became aware of that fact, my interest in him has increased tenfold.'

Macdonald passed his hand over his eyes, and stood for a few moments silent ; and when he spoke, his firm voice trembled with emotion, caused by the recollection of that grim episode in Scottish history.

' I do not, sir, remember your features, but I conclude, from your name, that you were one of the party of English officers who came to our inn after the battle, and also that you were one of the few amongst those gentlemen who raised your voice, in angry protest, against the bloody deeds of the Duke, who himself encouraged his soldiers to murder, in cold blood, our poor wounded Highlanders as they lay helpless on the field, after the battle. Alas for my unhappy countrymen ! ' exclaimed Macdonald, with a deep sigh ; ' their wives and children were massacred, their lands laid waste, and their homes given to the flames,

—and these were the deeds of a Christian Prince !

A murmur of horror and of sympathy ran through the little group as the old man raised his clasped hands to heaven, as though appealing to a higher tribunal against the atrocities of the butcher Duke, even yet, after the lapse of so many years, fresh in his memory.

‘ My dear young lady,’ continued the innkeeper, addressing Winnie, whose eyes were full of tears, ‘ my old heart rejoices to think that your lot is not cast in such troublous times. Just such another sweet and lovely girl as your daughter, madam,’ he added, looking at Mrs. Edmondston, ‘ was the mother of Charlie. Full of lové for her country, and of noble devotion to the cause of our exiled Prince, she entered into all the brave and loyal aspirations of her gallant husband, and shared his hope and enthusiasm. Happily, she did not live to witness the horrors of Culloden, her husband murdered in cold blood on the field of battle, the

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to regret, since I fear it has been the occasion of some mortification to my dear boy.'

'My dear grandfather, what do you mean?' asked the young man, in great surprise. 'You have ever been to me most kind and indulgent, and the debt of gratitude I owe you and my dear dead grandmother I never can repay. No love can ever have been greater than yours has been for me.'

'Aye, truly, we did love you, Charlie,' said the old man, his eyes suffused with tears as he spoke, 'and we loved you for his sake, for the sake of our gallant foster-son; not our own son, madam,' he added, addressing himself particularly to Mrs. Edmondston, as he made the announcement which struck all his listeners with surprise. 'No, madam, no blood of mine flows in Charlie's veins; though,' and here the speaker looked proudly around him, 'an it were so, the daughter of an English squire would suffer no abasement, rather the reverse, by marrying with a kinsman of Macdonald of Moidart.'

‘You are quite richt, sir,’ interposed Kincaigie, who, though he had kept in the background had been listening to the old innkeeper with the deepest attention.

‘The Macdonalds are a great clan, and I am proud to say that the clan Robertson can claim descent frae Angus Mor, the Lord o’ the Isles. Duncan Macdonald was the first o’ the Robertsons o’ Struan, and they are the male heirs o’ the auld Earls o’ Athol before the Murrays came in; and I can tell ye that though our territories hae been greatly diminished, compared with what they once were, the Robertsons hae always been able to sustain a high station among the Hielan’ clans, and tak’ an active share in trying to turn oot the German Elector and set oor ain ancient line o’ kings on the throne. Sandy o’ Struan died gloriously in 1715, and our banner wi’ the three wolves’ heids, erased, argent, was oot again in ’45. But, as auld Homer gars Glaucus ask of Diomedes, where’s the guid o’ talking about genealogies? The race of man is like the leaves

of trees: some the wind scatters on the ground, whilst others succeed them and sprout afresh out of the wood. In consideration of the leddies, however, I'll no repeat the Greek lines, though they are *verra* beautiful. But, Mr. Macdonald, do ye no remember me?' asked the laird, as he fixed his eyes earnestly on the old man's face.

The latter returned his gaze with equal earnestness, and then shook his head doubtfully.

'And yet I owe you my life,' continued Kincraigie; 'for you gave me shelter, at the peril of your own, when I fled to your house like a hunted animal from Culloden Moor.'

'It is Kincraigie,' said the old man, his eyes moist with tears, as he clasped the hand which the laird extended to him.

'Tell me,' said the laird, in a voice now broken by some strong internal emotion, 'though I hae scarce a doot on the matter, who is Charlie's father?'

‘ “Tis like you may have known him, Kincaigie ; he was a brave and gallant gentleman ; he was murdered on the field of Culloden by the command of the Duke of Cumberland himself. Major Wharton,’ he added, turning to that gentleman, ‘ though it is now eighteen years since, you will remember as well as I do, the account a brave officer, whose name I never shall forget—a Major Wolfe, I mean —gave of the death of Charlie’s gallant father ; though, at the time he was speaking of it with the other officers at my tavern, I did not know he was talking of my beloved foster-son—I only learnt that a little later. Let me tell you, madam,’ and here the old man turned to Mrs. Edmondston, ‘ the sad tale, in the words of that noble and high-minded English officer, how the brave young Highland chief met his death. He was stretched on the ground, wounded and helpless, amongst heaps of the dead and dying, in a spot where the battle had raged the hottest, when Cumberland, who was riding over the field after the conflict,

approached the spot where he lay. The young chief raised himself on his elbow when the Duke came up. "To whom do you belong?" asked the brutal German Duke. "To the Prince," was the undaunted reply; and that reply sealed my dear foster-son's doom. The butcher turned to Major Wolfe who was standing by, and said to him, "Shoot that insolent scoundrel." The English officer's noble answer will hand his name down to posterity, with honour as great as the infamy which to all time will attach itself to that of the brutal German Prince, who would dare to insult an English officer by asking him to do so foul a deed. "My commission," replied Major Wolfe, looking proudly at the Duke, "is at the disposal of your Royal Highness, but I cannot consent to become an executioner." The Duke was mortified, but he soon found a common soldier to do his bidding, and so fell my brave foster-child. I found his body on the field the next day, when searching for Charlie, whose little feet had strayed away even to the blood-stained

moor, in search of the father he had been always calling for, since he gave him the last kiss before going to battle, and whom he was never to meet again on earth. So when the poor child had become an orphan, and all his near kindred were killed or hunted down like wild animals, and his patrimony was ruined and confiscated, my good wife and I adopted him as our own. He had often been with us, for his mother died soon after he was born, and Colonel Fraser put him to nurse with my niece, who lived near us.'

As the old man ceased speaking, Charlie covered his face with his hands, over-powered by uncontrollable emotion, as he thought of the untimely and cruel end of his gallant father, whose loved face memory even yet, though but faintly, sometimes conjured up from the shadows of the past.

'Aweel, Charlie, be comforted,' said the laird, as he laid his hand tenderly on the young man's head, 'and rejoice that ye can ca' yoursel' the son o' sic a man, wha was as

guid as he was brave. He shed his dearest bluid for his lawfu' sovereign ! Would that I had had the happiness to die in his stead !' and here the laird sighed deeply. 'But though the German usurper kenned weel that I had focht against him, for some reason whilk I canna divine, he has always denied me the richt I am entitled to, to gie up my life for my richtfu' King on the scaffold, and be hanged, drawn, and quartered.'

As the laird spoke these last words, the company present exchanged furtive glances with each other, whilst Mr. Macdonald, ignorant of the speaker's peculiar craze, marvelled how it could be that a gentleman, who seemed to be so intelligent and spoke so sensibly, could give utterance to such a strange and extravagant sentiment. The laird, however, who had not noticed the meaning glances that had been passing between the listeners, turned to the old man, and said :

'We in Scotland a' ken the story o' the bluidy deed ye hae been telling us o' ; and

noo, sir, I ken wha was your beloved foster-son, and that Charlie, oor young freend here, is the son of my bosom freend wha was mair than a brither to me, Colonel Charles Fraser.'



CHAPTER XVII.

LEVYING A FINE AND SUFFERING A RECOVERY.

OCTOBER had passed away with its falling leaves and fresh breezes, its clear skies and frosty morning air, and November had set in dark and murky, true to its proverbial characteristics, making even the Scotch metropolis akin to London with its thick yellow fogs and heavy atmosphere.

The dreariness of the scene without made the interior of Mrs. Edmondston's apartments in James's Court look still more pleasant and inviting. The heavy curtains of blue damask, drawn closely over the windows, excluded even a breath of the keen east wind, the red firelight dancing on the dark oak-panelled walls chased away

all lurking shadows, and, together with the light of many wax candles, brought out, in full relief, the faces of the family party gathered together in Mrs. Edmondston's drawing-room.

Charles Fraser and his wife—a happy bride of three weeks' standing—Kincraigie, Roger Hog and his son and daughter-in-law, with the girls Dolly and Nancy, formed the party. Tony had left them for a little while, to hold a private conference with Colquhoun Grant. These private conferences with the lawyer, and solitary hours in his own room, together with his absence so frequently from home, and his mysterious foreign correspondence, had quite destroyed all Mrs. Edmondston's equanimity; and now, worse than all, he was on the eve of departure for the Continent, without assigning to anyone the motive of his journey, and he had just cut off the entail of his Westmoreland property.

Mrs. Edmondston had been pouring out all her griefs to her old friend Mr. Roger

Hog, who was himself sorely perplexed at Tony's proceedings, and knew not how to comfort the poor lady.

'It does seem vastly strange, and even cruel, that he should not confide in his own mother,' she said with a plaintive sigh; 'and yet, dear lad, never has he been in his manner, his speech, and his whole conduct, more dutiful and affectionate, which makes me feel all the more acutely the secrecy and concealment he practises towards me. Sometimes I detect him watching me with a look of such sorrowful tenderness, and he has said things occasionally, which seem to point at a long parting.'

'I say it is very singular,' replied Mr. Hog, with a perplexed look.

'Tis my belief that some nasty painted minx of a Frenchwoman has got hold of him,' exclaimed Mrs. James Hog, who, be it observed, had been plotting, but without success, to bring about a marriage between the young squire of Birkswick and a younger sister of her own, 'and has cajoled him into a promise of marriage.'

‘And in that case,’ said Mr. Hog, senior, struck with the idea, ‘he has cut off the entail of his estate, that he may resettle it in favour of his wife.’

‘I vow and protest, dear sir, that this is what my fears have pointed to,’ sighed Mrs. Edmondston.

‘But, my dear mother,’ interposed Charlie, ‘we should rejoice if this really be the case. Do we not all want to see Tony married and settled on his own estate?’

‘Ah, yes, but not to a foreigner!’ exclaimed Mrs. Witham, with a shudder.

‘I say, Charlie Fraser,’ exclaimed Mr. Hog, laughing, ‘you and Winnie are so enchanted with your new state, that you would pair all the unmarried men and women in Auld Reekie, if you had your way.’

‘Not omitting puir daft Jamie,’ said the laird, with a chuckle.

‘Besides, Charles,’ said Mrs. Edmondston, ‘you forget that Tony has thrown out hints, as I observed just now, of re-

maining abroad ; so he cannot intend settling at Birkswick.'

This answer caused Charlie Fraser, in his turn, to look grave, and he was forced to own that there was something mysterious in his friend's behaviour.

'So many suitable marriages as I could have arranged for him !' exclaimed Mrs. Witham, with a sigh of regret. 'There was Major Wharton's cousin, Miss Dacre, an only child, and a great fortune. I knew the poor girl was dying for him. I vow and protest it is very sad !'

'Poor girl !' repeated Mrs. James Hog, rather contemptuously. 'Why, my dear madam, the girl is thirty-five an' she be a day, and a perfect dowdy. I vow I never saw a greater fright.'

'I did not say she was beautiful,' replied Mrs. Edmondston, somewhat stiffly ; 'but you will remember Miss Latham—I vow and protest she was deeply in love with the dear lad, and she had both looks and money, as none will deny.'

'I vow I do not admire her style of

beauty, then,' remarked Mrs. James Hog sharply, 'nor her style of dress either; but, to be sure,' she added with an air of humility, 'I'm no judge.'

'I say, daughter, you are right—you are no judge; you are singularly dull in perceiving beauty in the female face or in the female attire,' said Mr. Roger Hog, as he looked first at her lofty head-dress, or *pompon* as she styled it, the component parts of which were a complication of hair and wool, of powder and perfume, pins and pomatum, shreds of velvet and ribbons, stuck with false stones of a thousand colours, and next at her brilliant ear-rings and hoop-clusters.

Mrs. James almost read what was passing in her father-in-law's mind, as he looked at her, muttering to himself, 'Pomponed, egretted, befrizzled, and beribboned all over!' and was about to make some very tart reply to his sarcasm, when Tony Witham, accompanied by Colquhoun Grant, entered the apartment.

'We hae put the finishing-touch to our

labours,' said the latter, with a smile; 'but sin' I hae been corresponding wi' those Southern lawyers, I hae never heird sic like havers, I hae been almost driven daft wi' their *Fines sur cognizance de droit come ceo*, their *conuzors* and *conuzees*, their tenants to the *præcipe*, and their *leading* and *declaring o' uses*. I' faith, the English lawyers are queer chiel's.'

'I say all lawyers, English and Scotch, are queer chiel's' interposed Roger Hog, laughing. 'There is jargon enough in our Scotch law, with its *tailzies*, *infefments*, *disponors*, *disponees*, and *hornings* and *poindings*.'

'Aweel,' replied Colquhoun Grant, laughing also, 'as I was saying, our labours are over noo, and Tony has levied a fine o' his estate and suffered a common recovery.'

'Egad, then I say that the lawyers behave better than the doctors,' said Mr. Hog, with a sly chuckle, 'for it's more than they will do to let us suffer either a common or an uncommon recovery. But,

Tony,' he added, looking more grave, 'as you have suffered a recovery, suffer one or other of these young ladies, whom by the hardness of your heart you have brought to the verge of the grave, to recover also.'

' My dear sir, you speak in riddles. What do you mean ? ' asked Tony amidst the laughter of the company, in which even Mrs. Edmondston could not help joining.

' I say, have you not already broken a score of female hearts ? ' said Mr. Hog, still retaining great gravity.

' Absurd,' replied Tony, laughing. ' I utterly deny the imputation.'

' Aweel, my dear laddie,' observed Kin-craigie, ' I trust to see you before long as happily wed as Charlie and Winnie. Dinna bring a French leddy to the auld Manor House,' he added; ' they are a' painted madams. Choose a bonnie Scotch or English bride.'

' A French lady ! there is no danger of that,' replied Tony, with a smile.

‘And when will you settle again at Birkswick, my dear child?’ asked Mrs. Edmondston, who had looked greatly relieved at her son’s answer to the laird’s remarks; ‘you used to be so fond of the old place.’

‘And so I am still, and always shall be,’ replied Tony. ‘And therefore I want you to-night, mother dear, and you, Charlie, to promise me that the Manor House shall not remain always untenanted; for I should like to think of it as it was in my childhood, with light and sunshine filling its rooms, and its gardens gay and blooming.’

‘Birkswick would not be Birkswick with you away,’ said Charlie, in a tone of the deepest sorrow; ‘and you are causing your mother and all of us great grief, because we see you have a secret.’

‘Nay, ‘twill not be a secret long,’ replied Tony, taking his mother’s hand caressingly in his own; ‘and you will all rejoice for me in the end, though you may grieve at first. You will lose me,

and yet not lose me,' he added with one of his old merry smiles; 'there will be no longer an Anthony Witham, and yet the owner of that old name will not be dead. There is a riddle for you all. You must try and guess it before I send you the solution, and that, I promise you, shall be in less than six months.'



CHAPTER XVIII.

LA TRAPPE.*

ONE bright autumnal day, in the early part of October, three gentlemen were riding slowly along the road leading from Lavat to the Monastery of La Trappe, situated in the neighbourhood of the town we have named.

They had just turned from the highway, leaving behind them the old French city, its high-pitched roofs standing out in bold relief against a sky of a deep vivid blue, whilst the fresh October breeze, ruffling the broad surface of the Mayenne, caused its

* Alban Butler's 'Lives of the Saints,' see 29th April: 'Mémoires de Madame de Genlis,' tome xv. p. 201, etc.

waves to break on the shore with a pleasant sound, like the subdued surging of some distant incoming tide.

The travellers were now pursuing, not the carriage-road, but a cross-road, leading more directly to the monastery, and grandly beautiful and varied was the scenery through which they were passing. Their way led through vineyards, where the rich purple bloom of the grapes, clustering on vines not higher than a man's shoulder, contrasted with the dark green tint of the broad leaves which half veiled the fruit from sight.

Ascending from the vineyards the ground swelled into hills, their sides clothed with broad pasture-lands, and their summits crowned with foliage, its still green tints merging into a soft purplish-blue in the distance. From this lovely landscape the travellers passed suddenly at one point of their route to a far different scene, one of sterile grandeur. The hillsides were stony and barren, overhanging rocks hung threateningly above them, and higher still

a series of mountain-peaks were sharply defined against the clear sky, whilst the sun gilded, no longer vineyard and rich pasture-land, but ledges of rock, hollows covered with short stunted grass or moss, and stony hillsides grey and bleak-looking.

But soon the scene changed again, for the three riders were now in sight of the monastery, and were passing through the richly cultivated lands tilled by the monks of *La Trappe*. In the fields and meadows they could see the brethren in their white habits at work, all labouring in various ways.

The gentlemen reined in their horses, as though by common consent, to survey the farming operations of two or three monks in a field skirting the path along which they were riding.

‘Hech, sirs, but they are canny chiels at their wark, these monks ; and wha wad hae thocht it ? and a’ gentlemen born.’

His speech showed this gentleman to be a North Briton, and so in truth he was, for the speaker was Kincraigie, and his

two companions Charlie Fraser and James Hog. What can have brought them from Auld Reekie to *La belle France*, to the Trappist Monastery on the shores of the Mayenne?

After bestowing a little more attention on the labours of the brethren, our Scotch friends made their way to the monastery and rang the bell for admission, its deep tones seeming to awaken echoes loud and many in the silence which reigned around, a silence unbroken when the last clang of the bell had died away, save by the rustling leaves of the trees as the breeze swept through them, or the twittering of the birds in the shadowy depths of the forest in which the abbey lies partly embosomed.

‘This silence is quite awfu’, murmured Kincraigie; ‘a mon nicht as weel be in his grave.’

Just as the laird had made this announcement, a small door in the large gate was noiselessly opened, and they found themselves confronted by a lay-brother in his habit, who, to the unfeigned surprise

and even dismay of the laird, cast himself prostrate on the ground before the visitors.

Charlie Fraser being a Catholic, and knowing something of monastic customs and practices, was not so surprised ; and James Hog, acting as he fancied on the precept of the poet, *nil admirari*, the observance of which, as he had read in his school-days, could alone make and keep him happy, though in truth he was naturally at all times a very phlegmatic young man, and a man of fashion to boot, showed no surprise at the prostrate lay-brother, and remained standing in silence, till he rose and motioned them to follow him.

Their horses having been led to the stables by another lay-brother, they did so, through a courtyard where the shadows were growing long on the sunlit pavement, then through an arched doorway, along a wide corridor or cloister paved with black and white marble from the quarries in the neighbourhood of La Val, and so through another arched doorway into the chapel.

The sacred edifice was severe in its simplicity, the altar of wood, and the few paintings dark and sombre. This austere simplicity was not without its charm to the laird and James Hog, since it resembled more in its appearance their own churches, and each of them assumed a reverential and devout attitude, whilst Charlie and the lay-brother knelt for a few moments in prayer before the altar.

From the church their conductor led the three gentlemen to one of the cloisters, where all the monks were seated, one of their number reading aloud from some religious work.

A strange and novel scene was this to Kincraigie and his companions : the profound reflection of the monks in their white robes, seated in rows so still and motionless that they might have been so many statues ; the sonorous voice of the reader, more impressive from the deep silence that reigned around ; and the bare and naked simplicity of the cloister—seemed to carry those who, for the first time, beheld

such a scene, out of the world and its noise and glitter and glamour, into a calm haven of peace and rest.

The spell was so strong upon Charlie that he started, as though awakening from a dream, when the lay-brother gently touched him on the arm and motioned him and his friends from the cloister.

Their conductor now led them to the parlour, where they found the Abbot and an aged monk, by name Father Anselm, waiting to receive them. Now the laird knew no word of French, and Charlie Fraser, though he could understand it, could not venture to speak ; so James Hog, who had studied the language in London in his youth under a French master, and had been in the habit of frequently speaking it with the French Canadians when serving with his regiment in North America, undertook to be the medium of conversation.

After the first compliments had passed, the Abbot, with kind and winning smile and urbanity of manner, informed Kinraigie

and Charlie, through Mr. Hog, that Brother Cuthbert would soon be with them, and that he was glad they had not delayed their coming any longer, as in two months the brother would be professed; 'and after a novice is professed,' he added, 'he writes no more to his friends in the world, nor does he hear of anything relating to them; he is content to know that there is a world, that he may pray for it.'

Charlie Fraser heaved a deep sigh, and was about to make some reply, when the door opened, and a young man clad in the robes of a novice entered the parlour. A cry of mingled joy and pain escaped Charlie's lips as he started forward and flinging his arms about the novice, exclaimed in a voice broken by emotion:

'Oh brother! best beloved! forgive me if I cause you pain by my grief and anguish.'

'And you a Catholic, too!' said the young novice, shaking his head, as he looked affectionately in Charlie's face.

'I am of the earth, earthy,' exclaimed

the latter, ‘whilst all your aspirations are after heavenly things. ‘Tis joy inexpressible to see you once more ; but the pain I feel when I think that our farewell in this world will be for ever far outbalances all my joy.’

‘Then do not talk of it,’ was the smiling reply, ‘but tell me of my namesake, little Tony Witham, in whom Brother Cuthbert will live again in the world.’

So spoke the youthful novice of *La Trappe*—once the merry and frolicsome Squire of *Birkswick*—no austere and gloomy ascetic, but joyous and happy, like all his brethren in religion in that vast monastery. Happy with a joy that was heaven-born, because heaven was the one object of their hopes and aspirations, and this convent a haven of sweet repose into which they had so securely drifted from the stormy sea of life in the outer world.

We left Tony Witham, in our last chapter, on the eve of departure from Edinburgh ; and though she had not

guessed his riddle, something in the affectionate solemnity of her son's farewell had impressed Mrs. Edmondston with the belief that this parting would be for ever.

So, perhaps, she was scarcely surprised when she received Tony's first letter, written from La Trappe, in which he had begged her to forgive him the secrecy he had practised towards her, necessitated, he said, by fear lest his fortitude should give way under her solicitations. Much more he wrote, and every line spoke so forcibly, how his whole heart and soul were wedded to the religious life, that the anguish of the mother was sensibly soothed. He told her, from childhood he had secretly resolved to be a priest, if he should grow up to manhood ; and how, whilst still a youth, he had conceived the idea of becoming a Trappist—his thoughts having been turned to that order by a book he had read belonging to the chaplain at Birkswick, written by De Rancé, the great reformer of the Cistercian Order.

Next to Mrs. Edmondston, Charlie

Fraser felt the most keenly the loss of the young squire, and his grief had gained in intensity from the contents of the last letter received from him, and written at the end of the preceding month, in which, anticipating his profession, he took a last leave of his friends, and announced the fact of his having made a renunciation of his estate, before leaving Scotland, in favour of his sister Winnie and her husband. Some portion of his personal property, after endowing his younger sisters, was to be distributed amongst the poor of Kirby Stephen and its neighbourhood ; for, as was usual with those entering the order, nothing was bestowed upon the monastery, which, though its revenues were not large, maintained a great number of distressed persons. Nervously anxious to avoid the least risk of being too late to see Tony before his profession, Charlie, at his wife's wish, also left England, so soon as his little boy was a month old.

The loving hearts of both Mrs. Edmondston and Winnie had yearned to accom-

pany him, but it was deemed best that mother and sister should not be exposed again to the sorrow of a second farewell ; and thus Charlie Fraser went, attended by the laird and James Hog, who was wishful to see the companion of his boyhood once more.

And now let us return to the parlour of the monastery. Tony is evidently so perfectly and serenely happy, that Charlie tries bravely to school himself into resignation, and to take an interest in the pleasant and lively discourse of the two old monks, who seem highly amused with Kincraigie. The laird was struck with horror at the monks eating neither flesh meat, fish, sugar, eggs, or butter, and insisted that such rigorous abstinence must shorten their lives, though he admitted that considering his sixty years —for such he guessed to be his age—the Abbot was to be complimented on his appearance, he having his teeth still, fine fresh colour, and plenty of flesh on his bones. Kincraigie joined in the laugh raised at his own expense, when informed

by the Abbot that he was turned eighty, and that there were many old monks in the community, and several of them older than himself.

‘ Extraordinary !’ said the laird, when he had pondered for a few moments over the Abbot’s remarks. ‘ I thocht Hielanders were a sturdy race, wha lived to a guid old age, spite o’ the mony hardships we are exposed to and oor scanty fare ; but I maun gie the honour noo to the Trappists.’

When these observations of the laird’s had been interpreted by James Hog to the Abbot, the latter smilingly replied :

‘ Our frugal and laborious lives exempt us from almost all diseases save affections of the chest, caused by the chanting in the church, and the observance of that part of our rule which obliges us to rise during the night. If a man can get over his thirtieth year without suffering in this manner, then he will live longer here than elsewhere, and his old age be more healthy and vigorous. But come,’ he added, rising, ‘ we will go to

the choir ; the monks are about to sing a portion of the Divine Office.'

Plain and simple was the choir, but imposing and striking in its vast dimensions. Very striking, too, was it to hear a number of voices so harmoniously blended together, that all seemed to merge into one. Little less striking was the deep, unbroken silence when at intervals the monks prostrated themselves and remained motionless, absorbed in meditation, till the stroke of a hammer summoned them to resume again the sacred chant.

And so the three days' visit of Tony's friends wore away ; the Abbot, Father Anselm, and three monks styled guest-masters, devoting themselves alternately to the entertainment of their visitors, who became more and more charmed each hour with their unaffected piety, their pleasing discourse, and the tender charity which every word and action showed forth.

Tony was allowed to be very much with Charlie Fraser, to whom he seemed to

impart some of his own fortitude and serenity as the hour of parting drew near.

Yet, like a miser, Charles treasured each fleeting moment, garnering up in his mind every word uttered by his beloved friend.

Every scene that he had witnessed during those three days became so vividly impressed upon his mind, that in long after years the picture was as fresh in its colouring as when first seen, and so in thought he was often with Brother Cuthbert. At one time fancy would transport him to the vast choir, where the voices of the monks rose and fell in one grand body of harmonious sound ; at another time he would be in the fields in the early summer morn, when the dew sparkled on the grass, the birds sang, and the flowers sent up a sweet fragrance, as the white-robed brethren, in calm and holy silence, pursued their daily avocations, or dispersed themselves abroad on missions of mercy to the rich and poor.

Then again, on many an evening, he

would stand once more with the laird and James Hog at the foot of the grand staircase leading to the cells, and watch the monks as, with slow step and reverent inclination of the body, they defiled past the venerable Abbot, who, with a palm in his hand, blessed each brother ere he sought his rest.

Sometimes, too, in his dreams, he would stand in Brother Cuthbert's little whitewashed cell, with its simple crucifix for sole adornment, and no other furniture than a straw palliasse for a bed, and a plain wooden table, whilst the words of the young novice seemed still to ring in his ears: 'Think of me as of one a thousand times more happy than he would be if he possessed all the honours and riches of the world; and my happiness is the greater, because the inconstancy of fortune cannot deprive me of it, nor can even death itself, which will only render supreme and eternal that which on earth is uncertain and bounded.'

And so in his dreams, in his waking

thoughts, and in conversation with Winnie, Charlie Fraser was often at *La Trappe*—in the library with its goodly store of volumes—in the well-furnished surgery, its windows looking out upon the pretty garden, stored with many a fragrant flower and plant—or in the vast refectory, where the monks were seated at their frugal mid-day meal, their table void of a cloth, their plates of tin, and their fare a little soup, some vegetables, two or three apples, a piece of bread, and one mug of beer, and one of water.

‘I dinna sae mickle object to the absence o’ flesh meat,’ Kincraigie would observe, in speaking of the fare of the Trappists, ‘and I could mak’ shift mysel’, I believe, to do wi’oot it. Yes, yes, I am sure I could live verra weel on gruel; oatmeal is a nourishing diet, and comforting to the stomach.’

‘I say,’ would Mr. Roger Hog reply, when he chanced to hear such remarks, ‘you would only find oatmeal nourishing and comforting to the stomach in the

form of porridge, taken along with plenty of milk. I say you would as ill like the water-gruel of the Trappists as the “twa failosophers” did their dish of snails.’

When the third day came, the day of parting, Charlie Fraser felt more resigned than he had ever hoped to be, for his friend’s happiness was so distinctly visible in his every word and look, that for him Charlie could only rejoice ; it was for himself alone that he grieved, and spite of his manhood, his eyes were dimmed with tears as the door of the monastery closed upon that beloved form, and he knew that he had looked for the last time upon Brother Cuthbert.



CHAPTER XIX.

LOYAL TO THE LAST.

TWENTY-FIVE years have passed since Charlie Fraser looked for the last time upon Brother Cuthbert, and during that quarter of a century many of the characters with whom we have communed in these pages have passed away to their rest.

Mrs. Edmondston died some few years after her son's profession at La Trappe ; an event, however, of which he had no certain intelligence, as, in accordance with the rules of the order, when news arrives of the death of a parent of any of the monks, that intelligence is not specially announced to him, the Abbot merely

asking the prayers of the community for the father or mother, as the case may be, of one of the brethren. It is possible, however, that some unaccountable impulse may have caused the heart of Father Cuthbert to throb in response to that appeal when made on behalf of his own mother. He was ordained priest some few years after his profession. Mindful of the strict rules of the order, Charlie Fraser refrained, spite of his loving solicitude for Tony, from inquiring too often, even by letter, respecting him ; but the Abbot's replies, written at rare intervals, brought joy and solace to his heart, for they told him how the virtues of the young monk had raised him to high posts of honour in the monastery, and how the poor and the afflicted for miles round La Trappe blessed the name of Father Cuthbert.

As for Charlie Fraser himself, mindful of the wish Tony had expressed that Birkswick should not be left to neglect and desolation, he threw up his practice and

went to reside at the Manor House, paying, however, frequent visits to Edinburgh, especially during the lifetime of old Mr. Alexander Macdonald, who had left Inverness and had settled himself in the Widow Gillespie's house. The hale old man lived to be over ninety.

Mr. Roger Hog and his son James were both dead, and the great wealth which the former had accumulated—for he died possessed of personal estate to a large amount, besides his landed property—became the subject of a contested succession, and the fortune, much of which had been amassed by the exercise of great parsimony, was, to some extent, dissipated in law-costs.

Dr. Glen, who had quite forgotten and forgiven the slander for which he had been tempted to take the law against the laird, has also paid the last debt due by all to nature, a circumstance which almost took the magistrates of Edinburgh by surprise, for having purchased an annuity of the city, he lived so long to reap the benefit that the civic dignitaries gave up all hopes

of his ever dying at all, and began to consider him as one of the perpetual burdens on the city.

Poor Jamie Duff has headed the last funeral he will ever see, and the harmless creature has himself furnished that mournful spectacle he was so fond of witnessing.

Of all Kincraigie's early friends, though he is now but sixty-five years of age, few save Colquhoun Grant remain ; and with him the laird still keeps up an affectionate intimacy.

During this long lapse of years, Kincraigie has been an annual visitor to Birkswick, the brotherly affection he had for the new squire's unfortunate father, Colonel Charles Fraser, appearing now to live again in his love for the son. And these annual visits were ever eagerly looked for by the young olive-branches at the Manor House, for, in keeping with the kindly disposition of the laird, was his extreme fondness for children, for whom he always had in his pockets a large supply of tops, pieries, and tee-totums of his own

carving and manufacture. But his craze has never disappeared, for he still anathematizes the Hanoverian Government for not condemning him to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, and makes various demonstrations of his loyalty to the exiled House of Stuart.

On the occasion of the death of the detested Duke of Cumberland in October, 1765, he derided the Earl Marshal's notice, that it was expected that all persons would put themselves in decent mourning from the 10th day of November, and forthwith procured for himself a gay suit made of the bright red and green Robertson tartan; and went up and down the streets exulting and singing stanzas of the Jacobite song, composed for the occasion, so well known as 'Bonnie Laddie, Highland Laddie.'*

* This famous Jacobite song was the last revenge of the Highlanders upon the 'Butcher' Duke of Cumberland, a name even to this day hated in the Highlands. The words 'Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie,' are usually repeated, in singing, at the conclusion of each line.

‘Ken ye the news I have to tell?
 Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie ;
 Cumberland’s awa’ to hell,
 Bonnie laddie, etc.
 When he came to the Stygian shore,
 Bonnie laddie, etc.
 The deil himsel’ wi’ fright did roar,
 Bonnie laddie, etc.

* * * *

‘They took him neist to Satan’s ha’,
 There to lilt wi’ his grandpapa ;
 Says Cumberland, “ I’ll no gang ben,
 For fear I meet wi’ Charlie’s men.”

‘ “ Oh, nought o’ that ye hae to fear,
 For feint a ane o’ them comes here.”
 The deil sat girnin’ in the neuk,
 Ryving sticks to roast the Duke !’

A little more than two months after the Duke’s death, came the news that the Chevalier de St. George had died at Rome, when, with loud voice and animated gesture, Kincraigie, standing on the spot where the city cross had erst stood, proclaimed Charles III. King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland.

And now we come to the last leading incident in the Laird of Kincraigie’s life, or

the last with which we shall have to do, for we are about to bid him farewell, only anticipating by two years his own final farewell to the world.

In the year 1788, Prince Charles Edward, the Bonnie Prince Charlie of Highland aspirations and song, expired at Rome on the 30th of January, the anniversary of the execution of his great-grandfather, the unfortunate Charles I.

On the Sunday after the intelligence of the Prince's death had been received, Kincraigie attended divine service, as was his wont, in Bishop Abernethy Drummond's chapel in Carubbers Close.

On the morrow he intended to proclaim Cardinal York king, by the style and title of King Henry IX. Now the congregation of the above-mentioned chapel had ever been staunch Nonjurists, but considering that Cardinal York, now the last representative of the House of Stuart, was a priest of the Roman Church, and consequently vowed to celibacy, they had resolved to acknowledge George III. as

their lawful sovereign, and to insert his name in their liturgy.

The laird's indignation may be more easily imagined than described when, in the midst of his pious responses as the officiating clergyman was reciting the Litany, to his amazement he heard the divine pray publicly for 'George, our most gracious King and Governor.'

Rage held Kincraigie spell-bound for the moment, and then he rushed forward, to the horror of the congregation, who now opined that the daft Highland laird had become dangerously lunatic, and laid his irreverent hands on the clergyman, snatching the book from his trembling grasp.

'No King George! No Hanover! Hoo daur ye pray for a King George?' shouted the laird, his eyes flashing fire. 'What would ye dae, ye miserable back-sliders frae the cause o' loyalty and honour? Ye wha sud lead the people on in obedience and submission to their lawfu' King, wad ye hae them pray for an usurper? Little did I think I sud hae lived to see

sic a day as this! But I'll hae nae mair on't; I say I'll hae nae mair on't.'

'My dear Kincraigie,' said Colquhoun Grant, in a soothing tone, who, being in the chapel, hurried to the laird's side that he might stay any further disturbance, 'say naething noo, whatever you think; ye ken'tis profanation to brawl and quarrel in a place of worship.'

'Why does he profane the chapel?' exclaimed Kincraigie, pointing to the trembling clergyman, who had already widened the space betwixt himself and the daft laird; 'he has renounced his rightfu' sovereign, shame on him! He is a Judas, and, like that traitor, has sold his King for filthy lucre. The cooart! the wretched creetur! I tell ye, had I been possessed o' unbounded wealth, I wad hae gien it a' for my prince. And oh, I wad hae dee'd for him wi' a joyful heart; but I was no to hae my dearest wish, and 'steed o' my banes blackening ower the Tolbooth, in honourable testimony o' my loyalty to my lawfu' King, I hae been destined to leeve

to hear frae those I deemed as loyal as mysel' the name o' an obscure German Elector, wi' the least possible drappie o' British bluid in his veins, substituted for that o' the last descendant o' the Royal Hoose o' Stuart.'

Grief now overcame the laird's wrath, and he suffered himself to be led by his friend Colquhoun Grant from the chapel.

To his dying hour Kincraigie retained his allegiance to the House of Stuart; and long years after his death, in the Grass Market, the Lawn Market, and Bow Head, his favourite haunts, those who remembered him would still speak with affectionate regard of the 'Daft Highland Laird, and **HIS DEAREST WISH.**'

THE END.

